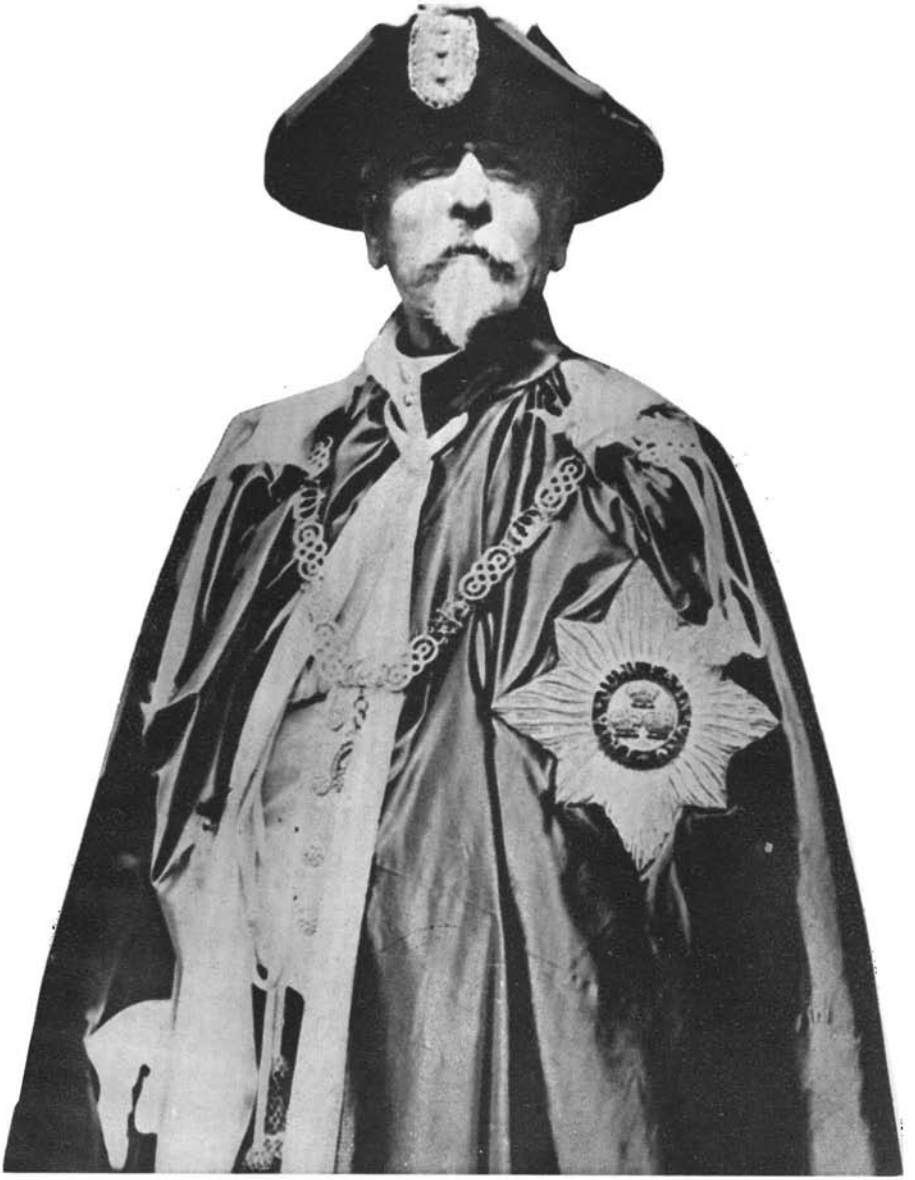
ZAHAROFF
THE
ARMAMENTS KING

"Zaharoff the Armaments King" was first published in England in 1935 and a new impression followed in 1936. Robert Neumann has, for Readers' Union edition (1938), brought his Zaharoff "legend" up to date and revised various parts of the text. To Readers' Union edition has been added a portrait of Zaharoff.



ZAHAROFF

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THE

ARMAMENTS KING

by

Robert Neumann

TRANSLATED BY
R. T. CLARK

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THE DIFFICULTIES OF A BIOGRAPHER

PROBLEM : To write the biography of a man who was still alive not so many months ago. He is just as moral, just as immoral as any other, neither devil nor saint, and if there is a something which makes him different from other creatures who are greedy for food and plunder, it is no more than this—that he has done his gathering of booty more successfully and more cleverly. His plunder has been won on the grand scale, and it is only because his success has been on that scale that his cunning, trickery, and unscrupulousness seem to have something of grandeur about them. His life is an adventurous one, but not a whit more adventurous than the times in which it was lived.

His biographer is faced with extraordinary difficulties. The archives of ministries and embassies and those of the great armaments firms as well are kept sternly under lock and key, and to describe how this or that document printed in this book came into the hands of the biographer would need a book in itself.

Add to this that the victim of this biography will not "stand still" like the victim of the photographer. He did, and somehow still does even after his death, everything he could to confuse the picture. You ask for his birth certificate. Alas ! a fire destroyed the church registers. You search for a document concerning him in the archives of the Vienna War Office. The folder is there, but it is empty ; the document has vanished. After all sorts of difficulties you obtain permission to inspect the papers of a law case. The papers are requested, but, alas ! no one in the office can find them. He buys a château in France and—how does the story of the editor of the *Documents politiques* go ?—"Sir Basil Zaharoff at once buys up all the picture postcards in the villages of Balincourt, Avrincourt, and the rest which show the château, and strictly prohibits any more photographs being taken." His desire to avoid publicity goes as far as that. And again add this, that at a certain epoch in his career Sir Basil himself put out the most amazing stories of his adventures that

you could imagine—in order to attract attention and arouse interest (a process not inimical to business) and also in order to confuse the trail. Can one say more? There are lies told to Zaharoff's discredit; there are lies told to his credit; and there are also lies for which there is no other explanation than the vanity of the man who told them.

The result was that to write this book a new procedure had to be found, a method very different from the usual methods of the ordinary literary biographer. To track down the facts required the diligence not so much of a writer as of a detective. Where documents were obtainable they have been reproduced. Where witnesses had to be questioned their evidence is given as far as possible in their own words, so that the reader can himself make up his own mind about their trustworthiness; and that is the more necessary as a whole series of witnesses only gave evidence on the strict understanding that their names would not be mentioned in this book. As to the witnesses themselves, two types may be distinguished: those who knew something and did not wish to tell, and those who knew little or nothing at all and wanted to tell a lot—from sheer communicativeness, from a desire to play a part in the drama, or simply out of pure good nature in order to make the task of the wretched author who had to write a book as easy as possible.

As an example of the first type, take a short extract from the conversation with a former Prime Minister of Greece, a man who for twenty years has been one of the leading figures in Greek politics, and to whose evidence I shall return time and again. (This man who in this book is called "Witness D." is *not* M. Venizelos, and I may as well say this at once and so avoid misunderstandings. The interview took place, as, by the way, did a good deal of the interviews reproduced in this book, before Zaharoff's death.) Like all conversations, this one began with his expressing the wish that his name should not be mentioned, and with my assurance that it would not be mentioned. Then it went on:

I. Your Excellency is said to be a very close friend of Sir Basil Zaharoff.

HE. What do you mean by a very close friend? I only had lunch with him once. Oh, there is nothing in sitting at table with him: he looks quite a gentleman.

I. What about 1875, Your Excellency? Do you remember what was said then about Basil Zaharoff's time in the Garbola prison in Athens in the paper *Mikra Ephemeris*?

HE. *Mikra Ephemeris*? The first time I ever heard of it. And what's this about Garbola? There's no prison of that name in Athens.

I. All right, Your Excellency. But in the Great War? In the position which you held in these days you can't have helped being brought into relations with Sir Basil.

HE. Basil Zaharoff was never once in Athens during the War. He stayed in London and Paris.

I. Very good, Your Excellency. But after the Great War? Didn't Sir Basil Zaharoff finance Greece's war with Turkey?

HE. Financed it? He never spent a pound on it. He just thought it rather fine that people should think that he could lose so much.

I. But surely that isn't in keeping with his well-known dislike of publicity?

HE. Dislike! He would rather be known as a *mauvais sujet* than not be known at all.

I. But you must be aware that other Greek statesmen have thought very differently of Basil Zaharoff. Skuludis, for example.

HE. Skuludis never was a statesman. He was nothing but a lackey of the King.

I. All right, Your Excellency. Would you tell me something of the row between Basil Zaharoff and Venizelos?

HE. (Suddenly speaking with passion). It was a mighty big and bitter row.

I. You are a Venizelist, Your Excellency?

HE. Of course I am.

You see. This really able and farseeing man actually in the end was able to contribute something to the character-sketch of Sir Basil Zaharoff. Luckily, there were other prominent Greeks who were more communicative ; we shall meet them later on. This "Witness D." is of the uncommunicative type. The task with the communicative is even more difficult. Whom should one believe ? I pick at random from my notes and find :

WITNESS RO. . . . and besides, he is the beastliest miser I have ever met. I used to feed with him day after day in the Café de Paris at Monte Carlo. He never took anything but a bottle of tonic water. Price, one franc fifty. He used to pay it out on the table in copper, never left even a sou as tip, took his overcoat off the peg and went off.

WITNESS P. . . . or look at that picture on the wall, or that one. Both are by young Greek artists whom Basil Zaharoff paid for to be trained. I could tell of others, too, musicians, scholars who would have been nothing if it hadn't been for him. He's a Mæcenas, a philanthropist.

Note that neither of these witnesses has any connection at all with either the political or business life of Greece. P. is an English merchant. Ro. is a Hungarian, the agent of a prince, a particularly well-informed person and a valuable witness whom we shall meet again on more than one page of this book. And it is the same all through. The witness D., who, as readers of the conversation I have just quoted will admit, can hardly be suspected of any partisan sympathy for Basil Zaharoff, calls him "a romantic in love who never looked at more than one woman all his life." Another distinguished Greek, G., and a Russian aristocrat, Baroness P., call him a "ladykiller" and add names and dates. On the other hand—to finish with this aspect of it for good and all—Ro. and H., at one time a beggar in Constantinople and alleged to be one of Sir Basil

Zaharoff's colleagues in the Tatavla fire brigade, said decisively that both opinions were not only dubious but demonstrably untrue. They had their own ideas on the subject. On this no more. It may serve toward the comprehension of the character not of Sir Basil Zaharoff but of the sort of witnesses whom I have questioned, that a whole series of persons knew all about a murderous attack by Basil Zaharoff on a policeman, a subject which we shall investigate in more detail later—and that in my collection of documents there is the evidence of a gentleman, the banker O., who declares that he was present when in the year 1875 Basil Zaharoff was shot while trying to escape from the prison in Athens.

That is the man whose biography has to be written in these pages.

What information does he himself supply? Let us begin with the fundamental, the simple things. What are the data regarding his birth? Every Greek is a little Homer—that is precisely what makes investigation so difficult. You may remember that Homer was born in seven cities. Zaharoff is more modest; he is content with four. And with a bad memory as we shall see:

1873. Giving evidence in a London court he said he was twenty-two. He was therefore born in 1851 and in Tatavla, the quarter in Constantinople where the poor Greeks live.

1892. He secures a birth certificate which tells a rather different story. Different and interesting. Here it is:

CERTIFICATE. The undersigned, members of the old established community of Mouchliou, bear witness on their oath as Christians that Zacharie Vasiliou Zacharoff or Zaharoff Basile was born in this town on October 6, 1849, the legitimate son of Vassiliou and Helene Zacharoff, and was on the 8th of that month baptized according to the rites of the Greek Orthodox Church by the priest Daniel, then pastor of the community,

and at the ceremony his paternal grandmother was godmother.

In witness whereof we append our signatures to this certificate.

MOUCHLIOU, *Dec.* 21, 1892.

Signed : A B
C D
(a third signature is illegible)

The Archimandrite bears witness that the above signatures are genuine.

Signed : MAKHARIOS

His Holiness, the Œcumenical Patriarch Mgr. Neophytos bears witness to the genuineness of the signature of the Archimandrite Makharios.

The Interpreter at the Appeal Court being sworn testifies that this copy is an exact copy of the original.

Signed : SUMIEN

PARIS, *July* 22, 1908.

What does this document tell us ? Let us leave the signatures of the Church officials out of it. The Archimandrite testifies to the genuineness of the signatures of three private individuals, and the Patriarch testifies to the genuineness of the signature of the Archimandrite. But these three individuals—really two, for the signature of the third is illegible—what extraordinary memories they have ! Without referring to the church registers —these were destroyed by fire—without any written documents, or they would surely have referred to them, these worthy men remember in the year 1892 what happened in the year 1849, that is forty-three years before, and so well that they remember that there was a birth on October 6th and a baptism on October 8th. They even remember more intimate details. And they hand this certificate of identity to a man who, as we shall see later, left their community at the

tender age of three and never saw them again until he came back as a man of forty-three, or rather in all probability did not come back in person but sent someone else to procure the certificate. That is indeed no valid reason for disbelief in the genuineness of the certificate, but it does afford ground for disbelief in its value as evidence. And this fact is not unimportant, because a man whom we shall meet shortly has something very different to say about Basil Zaharoff's birth and backs what he says with documents which are just as good or as bad as that of our hero.

How comes it that there are two contradictory accounts? In 1873 a young man was before a court. It was in his interest to make himself out to be as young as he could, and to make greater appeal to the court's mercy and at the same time not to be too precise about his original home. We will hear all about that later. But in 1892 there was no such motive. At that time, as we shall see, Zaharoff was at the turning-point of his career. The romantic period in his life and his business was over. From that time on he had to regard all that he did from quite a different viewpoint; he had to draw a line under the past; he felt the need of bringing his life into order. That was the moment when he procured that birth certificate. With the thought, perhaps, that he would use it at a marriage ceremony that he was thinking of attending? He carried it in his pocketbook for sixteen years before he produced it. Take another look at it. The French certificate of it as a genuine copy dates from 1908. Then it was not put to use at a marriage, but a few weeks later Basil Zaharoff received a decoration; he became commander of the Legion of Honour. Here is an instance which reveals the principle, knowledge of which lets us understand the ways and doings of the man —the principle of accommodation. A thorough, absolute, and unscrupulous accommodation to the needs of the moment. We will meet him as a Greek patriot and as a Russian patriot.

We will find him a Frenchman when it is necessary to be a Frenchman, and in England he is an Englishman. The same principle enables him to sell arms to friend or foe. It would be a fatal mistake to think this has anything to do with character, and that is why the angry attacks of the pacifists are all in the air. Men of his stamp are always terribly genuine. Not because they are simply amoral, but because the sphere of morality for them alters according to no known law. Only when we recognize the fact of this extreme "shrinking" of the sphere in which he is ready to be "moral" can we understand Zaharoff's methods of action.

This perfectly genuine accommodatingness to the needs of the occasion is quite in keeping with the fact that thirteen years later, in 1921, we meet yet another Zaharoff who has quite forgotten all these details which he once so glibly furnished. In 1921 Zaharoff was a great man. He was at the height of success, he was a British knight, he wore the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, he was reputed to be the richest man in the world, and the world knew well that the partner of his life was a duchess. At this very time the *Sketch* published a photograph of a young lady with this caption, " Miss Yvonne Zaharoff, the granddaughter of the famous philanthropist, Sir Basil Zaharoff." The famous philanthropist had reason to protest against this ascription of relationship. He did so in a letter which contains yet a third account of his birth. He was, he declares, born in the Phanar. Now, you must understand that the Phanar is the quarter of Constantinople where the rich and respectable Greeks live. And you must also remember that it is the great ambition of every Greek to be born in Constantinople, in Byzantium, in the centre of the later Greek civilization. Then you will realize that, according to the principle of accommodating things to the needs of the moment, there was only one possible and proper birthplace for a respectable Greek, the respectable quarter of Constantinople, the Phanar.

The fourth version does not come from Sir Basil Zaharoff himself, and obviously it is not produced according to the needs of the situation. At least, not according to the needs of *his* situation. It is the account given by a gentleman called Hyman Barnett Zaharoff, or rather Haim Manelewitsch Sahar, who was born on April 15, 1868, at Wilkomir in Lithuania, and who is ready to produce proof for you that Sir Basil Zaharoff is his father.

We shall have to deal in more detail with Haim Manelewitsch Sahar when we come to the place where his extraordinary and at first sight quite incredible story comes properly and sensationally into the official version of Sir Basil's biography. For the moment, just a word about this official version—and so about what was known, up to the time of the publication of this book, about Sir Basil Zaharoff and from what sources his biography was written.

I do not mention the stories which are told in Greek and also in Turkish circles throughout the world, nor do I waste time on the attacks in the newspapers which, when they do not reel into sheer incoherence, are based on these stories. But there remains a book which ranks as a source, as "a standard work." This is Richard Lewinsohn's *Der Mann im Dunkel.* This work, which has its merits, is not equipped with a note on sources. Part of the material in it is taken from another book, *Sir Basil Zaharoff, l'Homme mystérieux de l'Europe,* by R. Menevée, the editor of the *Documents politiques,* which was published by the author himself in Paris in 1928. This little work, which has remained almost unnoticed, contains a large collection of documents and is the most important source of information for a very large part of Zaharoff's life. It is trustworthy where it is content merely to reproduce documents. It begins to be less trustworthy when its conscientious and well-informed author yields to the Zaharoffphobia generally felt by the French, which dates from the days of the fall of Lloyd George in 1922, and is anxious to show up Zaharoff as a secret agent

of the British Intelligence Service. In part, Menevée's work is derived from the revelations of a certain M. Bonzon—who was equally susceptible to panic—in the *Activité française et étrangère* in 1922.

But besides the material derived from Menevée's documents there can be seen in Lewinsohn's biography another element. Here Lewinsohn has obviously followed hard in Zaharoff's tracks, and he gleaned quite a lot of important information. The hotelkeeper Lampsas of Athens, who has since died, and the former Premier of Greece, Skuludis, are two good sources. The details supplied by the latter are especially important; for this reason, that in 1874 Zaharoff made certain "confessions" to him on the credibility of which we shall hear something later.

The information which I myself have obtained from documents and from eye-witnesses is for the most part quoted in the text. If I except the evidence of the beggar H, the ex-fireman, which in more than one instance is very dubious, the most important data on the origin and youth of Sir Basil Zaharoff are those supplied by the witness I have already mentioned, the agent of a prince, Ro. This man is a passionate gambler; he has lost vast sums at Monte Carlo—and his animus against Sir Basil, as is evidenced in the accounts given me of his miserliness, may have sprung up because of that. That apart, Ro. is a man of very great shrewdness, and for years he has made the search for facts of Sir Basil's past the object of a hunt which would almost be sporting if it were not so bitter. And what he found and placed in my hands in the shape of a memoir is particularly valuable because, as was obvious from paragraph after paragraph, he had read scarcely a line of the revelations hitherto published.

From all these documents, sources, and testimonies we may construct the following.

ZAHAROFF: THE ARMAMENTS KING

I

ON THE TRACK OF A YOUNG MAN FROM THE EAST

WE must first go back to certain events of the year 1821. In that year the Greeks, inspired by the ideas of the French Revolution, plan a rising against their Turkish oppressors. But at the last moment the plan is betrayed.

The Greeks in Constantinople live strictly apart from the Turks, the rich in the Phanar, the poor in Tatavla; it is not difficult to hold them down. On Easter Day 1821 the Turkish population breaks into the Greek quarters, storms the cathedral, drags the Greek patriarch of Constantinople, Georgios, from the altar, and hangs him on the doorposts as he is, clad in his gold and purple. The body is then dragged through the streets and flung into the sea. It is a signal. A general massacre of the Greeks begins, and after the massacre a general exodus. Whither? To go into the country districts, to remain on Turkish soil is simply suicide. So they go north. Over the Black Sea, to their co-religionists in Russia, to the protector, real or alleged, of the Greek struggle for independence, to Russia.

Among the fugitives of 1821 there is a family whose name is given in the official version as Zacharios or Zacharias. Two other witnesses, including the trusty Ro. and especially the Frenchman Bonzon, declare that that form of the name is already an example of accommodation to the needs of the moment, that it is a Greek form of an original Sahar or Zohar. The latter are undeniably Hebraic. The name Sahar is a fairly

common Jewish family name, and if, after its emigration to Russia, the family promptly called itself Zaharoff, that is only "Sahar" plus "off," the dropping of a Greek termination in favour of a Russian one. In other words, a new accommodation to the needs of a new moment.

That is very plausible. But there is one thing against it. Certainly M. Bonzon is not always absolutely trustworthy. He wrote in the year 1922, the year when the French "unmasked" Zaharoff. Unmasking Zaharoff was then a sort of journalistic sport. And when M. Bonzon demonstrates to Sir Basil, "the hireling of the British Intelligence Service," that his name is not Zaharoff but Zohar, he does not do so out of a zeal for etymological accuracy, but because Zohar is a Jewish name, and M. Bonzon is one of those people who believe that a man must needs be wounded to the heart if it is proved to him that he is a Jew. This incursion into etymology would be of no importance at all if it were not for the existence of Mr. Hyman Barnett Zaharoff who a few decades earlier was Haim Manelewitsch Sahar, and who claims to be Sir Basil's son.

Whether it is called Zacharios or Zacharias or Zohar or Sahar, the fugitive family seeks refuge in Russia, and there at some date which cannot now be ascertained takes the name Zacharoff (Sir Basil, who has finally decided to be a Frenchman, writes it "Zaharoff"; we may as well adopt that form). Next we find traces of the family at Kischineff in Bessarabia. "The family" obviously means Sir Basil's grandfather and his wife Helena ; we have already met the latter in the lady who is mentioned in the birth certificate of 1892 as having been godmother to the infant Sir Basil at his baptism. They seem to have had two sons, the elder of whom was Sir Basil's father. We are not quite sure whether or not there were daughters. The family goes into the tailoring business, sells cloth and clothes.

From Kischineff the family goes to Otschakoff, a small

port on the Black Sea, east of Odessa, and from Otschakoff to Odessa itself. There is some evidence that the family lived in Odessa until 1841 or 1843, and even attained a relative prosperity. Whether as a result of this prosperity or because political conditions have changed, the family holds that the time has come to return to Turkey. It goes first to Constantinople, to Tatavla, the quarter where the family used to live, and as it does not make any progress there, for reasons that are no longer discoverable, it goes yet farther afield and settles in the little town of Mughla (Moughliou) in the south-west corner of Anatolia. The family, that is, Sir Basil's grandmother Helena, Sir Basil's father who, if we may give credit to the birth certificate, was also called Basileos, and Basileos's wife, whom he had married during their passing stay in Constantinople. Her first name was also Helena. Her family name cannot be definitely ascertained, but it was probably Antoniades. That is the state of the family in 1849 anyway. We can only conjecture that Basil Zaharoff's grandfather, the exile of 1821, is already dead, and that the daughters of the family, if any, have married. And we are completely in the dark as to the fate of that second son whom we have seen was a member of the family when it was at Kischineff. Is he too dead? Or has he remained behind in Russia when the family left? We shall hear later what Haim Manelewitsch Sahar can say about this missing uncle of Sir Basil, or at least claims that he can say.

Here we are, then, in Mughla in 1849. We cannot offer any proof that Sir Basil's document is a fraud, and we will say, therefore, that he was born in Mughla, on October 6, 1849, and that two days later, in the presence of the worthy Messrs. A B and C D and the third gentleman whose name, as a result of his indecipherable caligraphy, cannot be preserved to posterity, as they themselves testified on the birth certificate, was baptized according to the rites of the Greek Orthodox Church by a priest called Daniel.

He was baptized Zacharias Basileos Zacharoff—the Christian name Zacharias he retained for quite a long time. On the further fortunes of Sir Basil's family there is very little information. It is known that Basil had three sisters younger than himself, Sebastia, Charikleia, and Zoe, and that two of them at least were living in Constantinople in 1875. There is no trace of any descendants of the sisters. They are said to have become teachers, to have emigrated to America, and finally to have returned to Europe and lived in Paris where they were maintained by their prosperous brother. We know that Basil's father, keeping up the clothier tradition, made at least one trip to England and secured some business connections in Manchester. And, finally, we know that about 1852 the family left the little town of Mughla and once again went to Constantinople, or, to be more precise, to Tatavla, where for the next ten years or so they remained settled.

A word as to the place where they lived. We have said that the respectable Greeks lived in the Phanar. The quarter of the Phanar was the pride of every Greek and was always, in spite of the claims of Athens and Smyrna, considered to be the centre of Hellenism. The Greeks of Constantinople spoke a dialect of their own. Their literature, especially about the middle of last century, was considered to be the finest, the most brilliant. And here the Greek "nobility" lived, those great families which, even under the Turk, had been able to preserve their power and their influence. These families claimed to be able to trace their ancestry back for centuries. There were no documents, and oral tradition is doubly unreliable when one remembers how lively the Greek imagination is. But it can easily be understood now why Sir Basil, having become respectable, attached a certain importance to being born in the Phanar.

Tatavla presents a very different picture. Here lived the Greek proletariat, and the place, secluded as it was from contact with the Turkish world around it, had almost the

character of a ghetto. A tangled mass of poor crooked houses. Narrow, unpaved, filthy alleys. It covers a hillside about a square mile in extent. In the night-time there is nothing to be heard there but an occasional low call, a prostitute's scream, a signal whistle, or the tap-tap of a lone walker, while in the bright streets that surround it the touts for the public-houses cry up and down and water-sellers, nut-sellers, bakers, beggars, loafers, strident-voiced women, children with children in their arms push and jostle through the crowd of sailors who block the street and are smiled at, called to, spoken to in Turkish, Greek, Spanish, every language under the sun. Hookah-smokers crouch beside the house-fronts. In tiny rooms, open cellars, and dens half-underground, cobblers cobble, joiners hammer at their tasks. Money-changers invite to their tables, shoe-cleaners cajole, fruit-sellers haggle, and swear on their lives and the lives of their wives and children that their green melons are fine, and behind it, cut into fantastic shapes by gables, walls, flagpoles, and minarets flares and flickers the starry wilderness of the southern sky.

That is the environment in which Basil Zaharoff spent his youth.

If we are to get some light on these early years of his we shall have to adopt the method which has been proved effective, the method of confrontation. Confrontation here means the comparison of what I have called the official version of Zaharoff's life with actual data which I have obtained. Here, too, we may take Lewinsohn's biography as the official version, and it is derived, if not actually directly, at least in the last resort, from Zaharoff himself. Let me quote from it:

Such was the environment in which the young Zaharoff grew up. His father was altruistic enough to take pains to give his son a decent education so as to make life a little easier for him than it had been for himself. But it did not amount to very much. His relatives gave what help they could. A

brother of Madame Zaharoff, a wealthy gentleman called Antoniades, gave Zaharoff a post in his business. The young employee, Zacharias Basileos, had been found to be an earnest, bright pupil, but his father was not able to keep his son at school longer than was enough for him to learn the first two "R's" and something of the third. Then a rich fellow-countryman, Iphestidi by name, who lived in the famous quarter of the Phanar, took on himself the burden of paying the fees of the clever youngster from Tatavla at the English school. Until Zaharoff was eighteen this man paid for his upkeep and let him get the best education that could be got in Constantinople.

I have made this extract textually from Lewinsohn's book to show the copybook morality character of the reminiscences of Zaharoff—whether they derive from himself or from his friends. A man who is so well acquainted with conditions in Turkey in the middle of last century as our trusty Ro., the agent of princes, declares that at that time the foreign schools in Turkey were practically all mission schools, and that to obtain entry into any of them did not necessitate the intermediary of "a rich denizen of the Phanar." The mission schools did not ask fees, and indeed found it so difficult to get pupils that they literally searched the alleys for them. Besides, the story that he stayed at school until he was eighteen does not fit in with other information, as we shall see later. The most important thing in the story of this period is the name of the patron who paid for Zaharoff's education, Iphestidi. We shall encounter this name again in London in 1873—in baffling circumstances.

Let us carry confrontation a step further. The official version states that the youthful Zaharoff had put the alleged subsidy grant by the alleged Iphestidi to excellent use. But at that time his father lost his trading capital, never very considerable, in a couple of unfortunate ventures, and the son had to help to get the family out of the resultant difficulties.

He started out as a moneychanger but he did not disdain to take on any other work that would bring in a piastre or two. He tried, for instance, to crash into the fire brigade. He soon realized that he could make much more out of the foreigners who visited Constantinople than he could out of his own countrymen. He haunted the hotels in hope of being taken on as a guide or of getting some commission or other to do.

The matter contained in that short paragraph deserves a somewhat closer analysis. What do we see? A guide for the foreigner, a fireman, a moneychanger. Moneychanger—there is nothing inconceivable here. Anyone who has visited the East can call up those tables of the moneychangers, and the wide-eyed, quick-fingered men who sit behind them, always ready to produce in conjurer fashion a handful of copper coins for the banknote offered them, and whose complicated system of exchange, as the victim realizes later, lets them give 10 per cent. short, while 20 per cent. of the coins given will be out of circulation. One can well imagine Sir Basil Zaharoff in that *milieu*, a *milieu* of conjurer's tricks, of steady nerves, and unwavering eyes, in which there is only one morality—apart, indeed, from the morality of the restricted radius to which allusion has already been made—the morality of the sharp. That is the chief characteristic of Tatavla.

Now for the foreigner's guide and the fireman. Ro. also is aware that Sir Basil claims to have followed these honourable occupations. To my inquiry about what he had to tell on this point he proceeded to give me a description of Greek business life in Constantinople, and went on:

But when night comes, Tatavla becomes the sink of all the iniquities and indecencies of the East, a dangerous competitor to Galata, where the entire female scum of the East is concentrated in the triangle Jenischerschi–Jurik Kalderin–Rue de Galata, and sailors of every country enjoy every liberty. Tatavla is a pleasure resort of a rather different type. It is the

headquarters of the local prostitution and of the chief Oriental filthinesses.

When Basil Zaharoff, now become "Kt.," tells about his youth, he likes to represent it as the conventional career of the conventional citizen. According to his story he left the English school at the age of sixteen and then became a fireman and later a guide in Constantinople. That seems all right, and quite usual; there is nothing dishonourable about it. A fireman is a very useful member of society: a guide needs certain special intellectual qualifications; he should know languages and some history. But we must not forget that we aren't in Western Europe, but in Constantinople in the 'sixties. And we are not just in Constantinople, but in Tatavla, in the underworld of the Turkish capital.

In Constantinople the firemen had a guild of their own. They were organized in sections corresponding to the various quarters of the city, and they played very much the same part as did the gangs in America under prohibition. Whenever the alarm was raised, the firemen of the quarter rushed to it with their perfectly hopeless hoses, but these were used much less in any case than the burglar's tools that they also brought with them. When there were no fires, the *tulumbadschi* indulged in burglary, housebreaking, murder on commission, and kindred pursuits. The *tulumbadschi* belonged to the lowest rabble of old Constantinople, and membership of this honourable guild certainly is not a part of the experience of a young man which should be related by him. At least he should relate it only in places where no one knows what a Constantinople *tulumbadschi* was.

In his youth Sir Basil Zaharoff had all the qualities necessary for membership. He was very poor, he was very strong, he possessed unusual vitality and unusual ambition. As his people could not keep him he had to keep himself. Considering the excessive competition, that was not easy for a Greek.

His other occupation, the guide's, was also an occupation which at that time was very different in Constantinople to what it is in Paris or London. A guide in Constantinople was pretty much the same thing as a brothel tout. The travellers

who came to Constantinople in the 'sixties were always looking for adventure, the sort of adventure which gets you a term of imprisonment in Europe. There was no risk of that in Constantinople; all that the seeker needed was a well-filled purse.

Basil Zaharoff, with his keen eye to the main chance, soon discovered that this profession was much easier and much less dangerous than that of the *tulumbadschi*, who had a good many risks to run. Accordingly he devoted himself to this sort of guiding, and it was a type of activity that exactly suited him. He was engaged in it for three years of the time that he spent in Constantinople.

I quote this from the statements of Ro. after some necessary sub-editing, including the excision, which I thought desirable, of a couple of details, and the reader can judge for himself not only of Ro., as witness whose gambler's hate of the casino proprietor of Monte Carlo is almost always visible in his reports, which otherwise are always worthy of close attention, but also of the fact that when we come to documents Zaharoff's enemies must be treated as carefully as his friends. In this form Ro.'s account is undoubtedly inaccurate, but it shows clearly that Sir Basil could tell of his early experiences as fireman and guide only to a public which was completely ignorant of the conditions obtaining in old Constantinople. But Ro. does not indicate how far, if at all, Basil Zaharoff conducted himself as did the usual types in the callings he adopted.

Here we are faced with circumstances which need to be very circumspectly treated. This period of "youthful occupations" in Zaharoff's life extends up to the year 1865—and for the years between 1865 and 1870 I was not able to secure a single scrap of documentary evidence throwing light on what he did or how he lived in Constantinople. There is a yawning gap here, an empty space of five years.

The absence of documents is only negative proof. How far

it will be granted that the positive evidence which I shall now quote can be regarded as such—that, too, is left to the reader's judgment. Here we come to the "Document H.," to the information which the beggar and ex-fireman H. gave me, and to his reminiscences of Sir Basil Zaharoff. I lived for a time in the poor quarter of Constantinople—which is another story. I knew of a Sir Basil Zaharoff—this was before the books of Menevée and Lewinsohn were published—but only what was common knowledge, and no more than other readers of the newspapers. One night I heard his name mentioned in a low public-house in Great Galata Street. A clever Greek girl, who was pursuing her trade there, told me what I had never known before, that the "richest man in the world"—she was proud of him as all Greeks are—had come out of this alley. I used even then to write odd articles for the papers. In what the little Greek girl told me I scented "copy," and so I went into the whole thing a little. But what I heard afterwards seemed to me so incoherent and so incredible that I never wrote the article. I remember it only by an entry in my diary. It was only later when stone by stone I was building up the life of this modern adventurer that the entry began to have meaning and content.

The girl directed me to the proprietress of a brothel who was reputed to be a near relative of Zaharoff. I found the brothel, but I soon realized that I was on a false trail. I was introduced to a lady, very correctly dressed and very precise in her speech, who simply denied any relationship with Zaharoff. "Nor have I ever even had business relations with him," she added, and we may believe her. Whether she did know more than she would say ; whether she had on occasion bragged of that relationship and now was more reticent and careful to deny it, I cannot tell. But the trail was not altogether a false one. When I was leaving the house she said to me: "I'm so sorry that I know nothing. But I think you ought to speak to H. outside." That was the beginning of my acquain-

tance with H. In the forenoons he preferred to sleep; in the afternoon he was a beggar, but in the evenings and at night he was barman and odd man in the brothel—a small allowance which the proprietress gracefully made him.

Unfortunately, for the reasons stated I did not take down verbatim my conversation with H. At this late date I can only affirm that it began almost in the same way as did the conversation with the former Premier of Greece, who is called "Witness D." in this book. H. asked me not to mention his name, and I gave my word not to do so. Whether he had any particular reason for the request, or whether it was made because he had just a general dislike of a publicity that might call the attention of the police to himself, I did not inquire too deeply. Yes, he had known Zaharoff, he said. It was a good long time ago, and in those days he was just a youth. He could not give me dates; he did not even know the date of his own birth. His trade? He had gone about with strangers. Had he been a guide? Was that how he had got to know Basil Zaharoff? No, a little later they had been on jobs together. Jobs? What jobs and where? I can still remember how at this question H. suddenly became discreet. With a vague gesture he said: "We were in the Fire Brigade."

I. (I did not know then the significance that might be attached to "Fire Brigade" and "guide") And then?

HE. There was a big fire and he cleared out. He had to.

I. Had to clear out? What had the fire got to do with it?

By now H. was reducing himself to monosyllables. How I got him to talk properly again I don't remember. But he told me the tale of Zaharoff's effort at robbery and murder. I remember that it was this yarn that made me give up running the story down and drop the article I was going to write. The thing hadn't verisimilitude, and what H. told me I merely noted down as an *Arabian Nights*' tale. As to the date of this exploit, either he could not put a date to it or here I did

not follow him properly. First of all, H. seemed to me to be asserting that at that time Zaharoff had used the chance given by a big fire to commit robbery and murder, and that was why he had cleared out. When I tried to get him to give me some more details he corrected himself, and said—I give the sense of what he said, not a textual quotation—that Zaharoff hadn't committed his crime at the time of the fire, but later, after he had got back, some years after.

H. I can't tell how many years, but he had to go to quod for it. He escaped and did in a policeman who tried to stop him.

I. That wasn't robbery and murder. And how on earth could he be put in prison for a murder which he only committed when he was trying to escape from it ?

H. was now completely confused, and it can be understood, I think, why the information that he supplied could not be used as the groundwork for an article on Sir Basil. If we leave the "robbery and murder" out of it, this is all that there is in H.'s evidence : Zaharoff was a "guide" and then a "fireman" —in that sequence, not in that given by Ro. and Lewinsohn— until some big fire ; then he disappeared ; but came back some years later, and got into some trouble with the law.

Here I was brought up once again against the "gap" of some years in the life of the young Zaharoff, brought up against it while pursuing a path quite different to the former one. It remains only to try to define its time-limits. It comes after "a great fire." I went through the history of Constantinople and I found that the last great fire in the city was in the year 1865. The chain of probabilities was therefore completed. Probability, be it understood, not proved fact. This really is all we can say : there is a considerable body of evidence to show that the fireman, Basil Zaharoff, left Constantinople after the great fire of 1865 for no special reason, or because he had to fly from it, and that he reappeared in the city a few years

later—apparently in 1870. Where was Zacharias Basileos Zacharoff during these years ?

It is to this period that the tale of Haim Manelewitsch Sahar belongs.

On April 11, 1911, a gentleman in Birmingham, a certain Haim Manelewitsch Sahar—it is not certain whether at that date he was calling himself Hyman Barnett Zaharoff—read in the *Birmingham Daily Mail* an item from St. Petersburg, which said that a "M. Zaharoff" had given a sum of twenty thousand pounds sterling for the development of Russian aviation. This piece of news made an idea flash into the mind of Haim Sahar, an idea that rapidly hardened into certainty, to a certainty indeed which from that hour was part of his life and became his destiny.

That the name Zaharoff was identical with the name Sahar he realized at once, without any knowledge of etymology, without any knowledge of the onslaught of M. Bonzon—in any case this appeared in the Press only eleven years later —and without any knowledge of the investigations of our friend Ro., who at that time had no thought at all of concerning himself with Sir Basil. Mr. Haim Sahar, you see, comes himself from Russia, and he knows how many people there are fond of giving their names a national Russian colour by the very convenient method of adding "off" to the original names ; indeed, it is not impossible to believe that Mr. Haim Sahar himself at that very time, and quite independent of his perusal of the *Birmingham Daily Mail*, was already in possession of the name Hyman Barnett Zaharoff. The "M. Zaharoff," of whom the St. Petersburg message spoke as cheerfully giving away twenty thousand pounds, was actually a M. Sahar, more fully Manel Sahar—and Manel Sahar was the name of his father, a father who disappeared, and for whom Haim Manelewitsch had been searching since he was seventeen.

What can he tell of him? In the little town of Wilkomir, then in the Russian government of Kovno, and now in the independent state of Lithuania, there lived in the 'sixties of last century a man of the name of Sahar, a military tailor by trade. It is alleged that he came from the south when he was young, from the town of Kischineff in Bessarabia. In the house of this tailor there lived a very young man of whom two stories are told, one that he was the son and the only son of the tailor, and the other that he was possibly not the son of the tailor but a very near kinsman who had emigrated to Wilkomir. But it is certain that he called himself Sahar, Manel Sahar. Despite his extreme youth, this Manel Sahar was a drinker, a gambler, a womanizer, and a brawler, and was such a trouble to the decent peaceful Jewish community that it was resolved to fit him out at its expense and hand him over to the recruiting sergeant, although as an only son he was, by the law then ruling, exempt from military service. But they would get rid of him and at the same time preserve from military service another young man who was a more useful —and no doubt a more prosperous—member of the community. So far the story has nothing incredible about it; such transactions were very common in Russia at that time. The substitution of nephews for sons and sons for nephews, the deliberate confusion of relationships, the coming and going of young men with the purpose of dumping the surplus of the big family on the childless and so creating "only sons" who were exempt from military service, was a common practice, and was almost a legitimate way of defence against the brutal recruiting methods of that army of the Czar which was cannibal in its consumption of men, an army which on the one hand summoned the Jews to defend the fatherland, and on the other planned pogrom after pogrom. Be it noted that one of the chief centres of pogroms was Bessarabia in general, and Kischineff in particular, and the possibility cannot be rejected that it was the existence of pogroms that caused

the Sahar family to leave that town. The other means of defence against the Moloch of compulsory service will come up again—the systematic falsification of particulars of birth.

Let us get back to this bad lad, Manel Sahar. He agreed to the bargain, and willingly or the reverse became a Russian soldier. But before he left the little community he committed another serious offence against its moral code. In the course of the year 1867 he got in tow with a girl called Haje Elka Karolinski, and married her without troubling about the usual period of formal betrothal, a circumstance that later gave the lady the chance to contest the validity of the marriage. At any rate, in 1867 there was a marriage, and on April 15, 1868, the birth of a child, no other than our friend Haim Manelewitsch Sahar. The certificate of birth is in existence.

Of his childish recollections, Haim Sahar, or, as we may now just as well call him, Mr. Hyman Barnett Zaharoff, speaks with a certain reticence which is rather human in its way and rouses one's sympathy, especially when one remembers that evidently he has to tell of rather cavalier treatment on the part of his father. Only once did he make a slip, I remarked that this Manel Sahar must have been a Jew, while Sir Basil is a Greek Catholic.

HE. He got baptized later, after they took him to Siberia.
I. They took him to Siberia? As a convict?
HE (taken aback). I shall have to ask my lawyer whether I should talk about that.

I pressed him, but it was no use. None the less he gave me these two anecdotes of his childhood. First:

I was about two years old and could stand. I was holding on to the corner of the table. My father came in. He was a soldier. He took off his clothes. I noticed that both his middle toes were bent and shorter than the others. Also I noticed that he had two scars of burns. On his back, between the shoulder blades. They were shaped like bean pods.

And second:

It was rather a miserable life. My father was seldom at home. He came back again when I was about six or seven. My mother chased him out and got a divorce (i.e. got the marriage declared invalid because the regulation betrothal period had not been observed). The marriage was dissolved in Bielsk in the Grodno government. My mother then married again.

Thereafter Hyman Barnett Zaharoff had nothing more to tell of his boyhood except that he was still a small boy when he was taken to Kovno, that he left that town when he was seventeen, and went out into the world—and to search for his father. He had got hold of a story that his father had some connection or other with England. Therefore the youth went off to England, though he did not know a word of the language, lived in the slums, was tossed hither and thither and finally landed in Birmingham. There he lived the hard life of the lower middle-class and had long forgotten that romantic search for a lost father when he happened to read the message from St. Petersburg in the *Birmingham Daily Mail* about this "M. Zaharoff" and his twenty thousand pounds. He did what anyone else in his place would have done. He wrote to the society for the development of aviation mentioned in the message, and asked for the address of the donor. And he received almost by return a letter in French which is among his documents to say that "M. Zaharoff" lived in Paris at 53, Avenue Hoche.

Let us pause here a moment and try to realize what really happened. What we have witnessed is the arrival of adventure in the average existence of an average character. This small man from a small street did not for a moment stop to consider that the similarity of Zaharoff and Sahar was hardly a sufficient basis on which to found a claim at law. It did not give him any food for thought, once he had identified Sahar with Zaharoff, that in the item in the paper there was no mention of a " Manel "

but only of an "M." And suppose this were only the usual French abbreviation for "Monsieur"? M. Hyman Barnett Zaharoff had no knowledge of French and he did not concern himself overmuch with the printed page. He was proof against that objection. He remained simple in his faith. For—and this is important—simple faith, the firm conviction in the justice of his cause, did not falter even for a second, even although he did not know what we know. For him this "M. Zaharoff" was a blank sheet. He knew nothing at all of the curious correspondence in character between the young Basil of the Fire Brigade days and the young Manel Sahar at the time when they had to put him in a uniform. He knew nothing at all of the "gap" in Basil Zaharoff's Constantinople period with which we have been so concerned, a gap into which the "Wilkomir complex" so admirably fits. At that time Mr. Hyman Barnett Zaharoff did not even know of his extraordinary resemblance to the gentleman of the Avenue Hoche. Adventure, destiny, had broken into the even tenor of his life; from now on he is no longer driven on by his own will but by some higher power. And the curious, the mysterious thing is that the circumstances of his bowshot at a venture come to his aid and give it support.

Here begins the battle of the man in Birmingham with the man in the Avenue Hoche for the admission of paternity. He claimed recognition, so he wrote in his first letter, not from merely selfish motives; rather he wanted to have a father. But across the channel there was clearly no very solid belief in his disinterestedness; the letters of Mr. Hyman Barnett Zaharoff were not answered. Nor were the letters of his lawyer. Then he decided—two years have passed and we are now in 1913—on a general attack. He got together what money he could and went off himself to Paris. He went to that imposing house in the imposing Avenue Hoche; he went once, he went twice, he went a dozen times; Monsieur Zaharoff was either "out" or "at an important conference." But it was not so

easy to get rid of the little man from Birmingham ; he had still some money left. He bribed a servant and got hold of the private telephone number of the inaccessible gentleman and the fact that about three o'clock he answered the telephone himself, because it was then that his intimates usually telephoned him. As Hyman did not speak French he took a lawyer with him. He got through. The lawyer said what he had to say to Monsieur Zaharoff and the miracle happened. The great man was not unapproachable ; he wanted to speak to his son himself. Face to face ? Later, perhaps, but at the moment let him come to the 'phone. But he can only speak English. Then let him speak English.

That was the moment which was decisive of the destiny of Mr. Hyman Barnett Zaharoff. He took up the 'phone and spoke as if his life was at stake. The great personage at the other end of the line was an old and rather lonely man. It is quite possible that for an instant he toyed with the thought to summon to him this son whom some time somewhere in that long, full life of his he may have begotten, to fill the place that was still empty, the place of the heir. That nothing of the sort happened, that this pregnant moment had no results can be understood by anyone who had met the worthy Hyman Barnett Zaharoff. There is nothing big about him ; he is not accustomed to put thought into words. Sir Basil had had a hard fight to become by 1913 an important person, a director of Vickers, allied to a duchess. After half a minute on the telephone he must have seen that, apart altogether from the rights or wrongs of the case, this man from Birmingham and Wilkomir could not be welcome to him as a son. So he listened composedly to what the other had to relate, and said neither yes nor no. He asked him to send a written account of his claim to relationship. A meeting ? He said he would be willing to go to any café which the young man selected. He did not keep the appointment, and the man who was battling to obtain a father had to go back

home after waiting in vain for three hours. The general attack has failed; the money is spent. Once again he goes up to the door of the house in the Avenue Hoche and stays there until he sees the inaccessible Zaharoff face to face, perhaps for the first time, and perhaps not for the first time in his life; sees him just for a moment. Then he is in his car and is round the corner. And Hyman Barnett Zaharoff goes back to England.

Did that mean the end for this little man of the dream of wealth? It seemed so. Life had to be lived; the daily bread had to be won, and war was looming in the distance. While Basil Zaharoff's star rose ever more steadily, while he was becoming one of the richest men in the world and moving nations about like pieces on the board, the man who was perhaps his son went on with his humble life in Birmingham, and then in London where he lived the dull life of a small shopkeeper. He had a wife who preferred an actual humble breadwinner to the potential heir to a mighty fortune. He had nine children. He keeps their photographs in his pocket-book—a somewhat plump though charming eldest daughter, a young man who became a British sailor, a thin little girl in a spangled dress, standing stiff and strained. "She is a dancer," he says gently. And among them is the photograph of Yvonne. Miss Yvonne Zaharoff, a pretty girl with extraordinarily expressive eyes with a hint of mystery in them, her features betraying nothing in common with those of the family which have become sharpened and coarsened in the battle for humble existence. Perhaps it was because of this daughter that the father with half his life behind him took up the cause of his sonship once again. Or did the lady act on her own accord? The way things went makes the latter supposition the more probable. In 1921 the *Sketch* published a portrait. Below was the caption "Miss Yvonne Zaharoff, the granddaughter of a well-known philanthropist, Sir Basil Zaharoff." We have already seen how the well-known philan-

thropist reacted to that. His lawyers demanded the proof of relationship possessed by this granddaughter out of the blue. The lawyers of Mr. Hyman Barnett Zaharoff gave evidence. And they received the declaration which is among the documents, the declaration written in French by Sir Basil himself. It is dated from the Château de l'Echelle, and states that Sir Basil had no connection at all with the town of Wilkomir, and that he was born in "the Phanar, Constantinople." Whereupon Mr. Hyman Barnett's lawyers produced documents on their side which purported to show . . . There is no need to go on ; we know how these things are. But there are two minor incidents of interest to record which are connected with the portrait published in the *Sketch*.

First, in the shoe-shop kept at that time in London by Mr. Hyman Barnett Zaharoff there appeared twice running the two daughters of the Duchess of Villafranca, intent on buying shoes, a piece of business which they were accustomed to do in very different shops in very different parts of the city. It is no secret that these two ladies some years later were made his heirs by Sir Basil. While they were buying shoes they were obviously interested to learn something of the life of the proprietor. And it was evident, that is, if you believe Mr. Hyman Barnett Zaharoff and the witnesses he can bring, that the younger daughter of the proprietor and the elder daughter of the Duchess of Villafranca were as like as two peas.

And second, while the lawyers were sending letters to and fro, there was a slight rearrangement in Mr. Hyman Barnett Zaharoff's household. One day Yvonne, the lady of the photograph, packed her small suitcase and went off to France. If one can believe Mr. Hyman Barnett and the assurances of his able and precise lawyer she was sailing in the Mediterranean on her own yacht, that is, when she was not living in her own castle near Paris. What did it mean ?

For twelve years there were no developments in the case of

Hyman Barnett Zaharoff. We meet him again in 1933. He has separated from his wife and is living—in the same street as she but without having anything to do with her—the life of a lone eccentric. The children have left him or gone out into the world. He is now sixty-five and has once again leisure to search for his father. There is something extraordinary here in this contest of two greybeards, trembling on the edge of the great abyss, and the reward to the victor is no longer a matter of sonship and fatherhood, but a lump sum in cold gold coin.

The news from the front in that year 1933 ran thus: The lawyer of the aged son issues a short report on the circumstances of his client in the *Daily Herald*. Thereupon there is a new witness, a female one. She comes from Wilkomir and she relates that in Wilkomir they still remember very well the case of Manel Sahar, who came and went like a swift meteor. There still live there several witnesses who are ready to testify how much he resembles the pictures of Sir Basil Zaharoff which are now appearing in the illustrated papers of every land.

At the same time another witness—also female—appears. She is an Englishwoman who lives in London. She is now sixty, and it is more than thirty years since she was an actress and found in Sir Basil a patron of her artistic ambitions. She puts a packet of yellowed letters on the table. The last dates from December 1927, and this time it is not from Sir Basil himself but from his secretary. The old gentleman remembers the days of yore, and he sends to his former friend now in poverty a present of money. And this friend is ready to testify that Sir Basil at that time, that is thirty odd years ago, had not quite forgotten his past in the North-East of Europe. He used to tell her about it. And he also told her that he was well aware that somewhere in Russia he had a son.

That is how the matter stood up to Basil Zaharoff's death, and in many respects still stands, as far as Mr. Hyman Barnett Zaharoff, or more correctly Haim Manelewitsch Sahar, is

concerned. There can be no doubt; we have a whole series of threads in hand. But when we examine them and seek to unravel the story we have to go carefully, for here it is not only a question of documenting a section of a biography but to some extent of the destiny of a humble man and his family, who dreams of one day bringing against the heirs of the old man of Monte Carlo the law suit which he failed to bring against the old man himself while he was alive. What proofs are there, and of what value are they? Once again let us go through what we have obtained and analyse the evidence point by point.

We have knowledge now that in the 'sixties there was living in Wilkomir a military tailor who in his youth had emigrated from Kischineff. The name Sahar is not an uncommon one. Besides, we remember that in the year 1921 the Sahar-Zaharoff family had fled from Constantinople, and had drifted to the Bessarabian town of Kischineff; that there in all probability they had two sons and that one of these sons, between the year of the flight 1821 and the year of the return to Turkey 1843, had disappeared from our ken. It cannot be regarded as impossible that he had gone north and that he was the Sahar of Wilkomir. This possibility can no more be denied than can the possibility that Haim Manelewitsch Sahar—without any knowledge of this investigation—knew at least that the Sahar of Wilkomir had a brother somewhere, while the trade of military tailor may be a natural consequence of the hereditary connection of the Sahar-Zaharoffs with the clothing trade. On the other hand, it must be admitted that this is a very favourite trade with Russian Jews, and also that another family called Zacharopoulos, living in Constantinople, claims the fame of being descended from this lost uncle of Basil Zaharoff.

We come now to the question which is completely open, whether this notorious evil-liver, Manel Sahar, is the son of the military tailor, or an *emigré* nephew, or a relation of some sort. It is a question which cannot be answered definitely,

and here we have to go simply on circumstantial evidence. That there is a distinct psychological resemblance between the fireman who fled from Constantinople and the bad lad of Wilkomir is undoubted, and we have already noticed it. Equally, we have explained why there should be a certain lack of clarity in the relationship between Manel Sahar and the tailor. That the Jewish community of Wilkomir should have succeeded in getting rid of an undesirable young man, "although as an only son he was not liable to military service," is rather in favour of the view that the community knew, and could use its knowledge to bring pressure to bear on the youth, that he was *not* an only son and was not even the son of the military tailor. (If he was, then Hyman Barnett Zaharoff is not Sir Basil's son, but the grandson of his uncle.)

But there is still a problem, the problem of the birth dates. If we compare the birth certificate produced by Sir Basil from Mughla, and Haim Manelewitsch Sahar's document from Wilkomir, we reach this conclusion, that Basil-Manel can have been only eighteen and a half years old when his son was born. He was then married before he was eighteen. And yet before that he had been a guide in Constantinople, a fireman, an *emigré* to his kin in the North, and a notorious rascal in Wilkomir! Even if we take into consideration the fact that in the East people come quickly to maturity, that is quite incredible. It becomes credible only if we accept something that we have already discussed, the fact that minorities who suffered persecution in militarist countries systematically falsified their birth certificates. A man became liable to military service when he was about eighteen. He could gain two years if, at the right moment, he could produce a document which showed that actually he was only sixteen. As a matter of principle, sons either were not reported to the authorities or with the longest delay possible. Here is just another instance of "accommodation to the necessities of the moment." We should not attach to the birth certificate of Mughla any more

worth than it merits. Witnesses are as a rule rather complaisant persons who are always ready to give their memories a prod, and they are not necessarily to be considered *mala fide* because of that. If Mr. Hyman Barnett Zaharoff, for instance, wanted to appeal to those witnesses from Wilkomir convinced of the identity of their Manel Sahar with our Sir Basil, he would without any difficulty get a document signed by three worthy gentlemen ; the Rabbi would witness to the genuineness of three signatures, and the Chief Rabbi would witness to the genuineness to the signature of the Rabbi, and so we should also have a birth certificate of Sir Basil Zaharoff, a document so legal—and yet so little evidence—as the document from that little town in Asia Minor—which says precisely the opposite. Add to it that the statements of Sir Basil himself are conflicting. We have already mentioned the remarkable variations of birthplace. Add to that, that by the Mughla certificate Sir Basil was not a year old in 1849, while on the contrary when he was in court in 1873 he was twenty-two—that is, he was born in 1851. And again that in the year 1921 he confessed to the *Daily Mail* that he was sixty-six, which makes the year of his birth 1855, and that, according to the information supplied by our witness, Baroness P., he said that in 1933 he was seventy-five, which makes his birth year 1858, and it can be seen that the information he himself gives as to the date of his birth need not be taken too seriously. He becomes steadily younger, and we heartily envy him. But again we cannot simply dismiss without more ado the assertion of Haim Manelewitsch Sahar to the effect that his father, whether he was called Manel or Basil, was not born in 1849, but waited for a year or two. Besides, in 1933 Mr. Hyman Barnett Zaharoff told me that he was sixty-two—and was rather painfully surprised when I rather tactlessly proved to him from his own documents that actually he was sixty-five. Whether this lowering of one's age is hereditary and so affords a new proof of kinship, I leave to the reader to decide.

The rest of the material supplied by Hyman Barnett Zaharoff may be dealt with quite shortly. When Miss Yvonne Zaharoff goes to France, and is said to come into the possession of wealth—what does that prove? Does it prove that Sir Basil recognized her as his granddaughter? We must treat this, too, as we must all the information collected, and look solely to the cumulative effect of it all. That is particularly true of the resemblances which we have found in the course of this investigation. There is the resemblance stated by the Wilkomir witnesses between the Manel Sahar who disappeared from their town and the pictures of Sir Basil. There is the resemblance between the daughter in the shoe shop and the daughter of the duchess. There is the resemblance between the father on the defensive and the son on the offensive. For my own part I can give only one judgment on these facts. It is quite inconclusive—and it amounts only to this, that in a room of strangers, himself a stranger to me, I was able to pick out Hyman Barnett Zaharoff. On the other hand, there are certain definite resemblances in externals which are hereditary and decisive of heredity; for instance, the place, axial position, and shape of the ear. The difference between the round, protruding ears of Mr. Hyman and the flat, big-lobed characteristic shape of Sir Basil's ear is obvious even to the untrained and non-scientific observer. But one needs to have for comparison a picture of the mother, Haje Elka Karolinski, to see whether this deviation from the Basil earform does not originate with her. You can see we are dealing here only with indications.

But there remains a substratum of fact. First, what was related by the former actress about Sir Basil's mention, thirty odd years ago, of his past and his son in Russia. Secondly, there are the childish memories of Mr. Hyman so far as they concern definite marks on the body of his father, the stub middle-toes, and the pod-shaped scars:

I. Let me for a minute put myself in the position, Mr. Hyman, of Sir Basil's lawyers. Suppose they say that the story of the actress is simply a misunderstanding, and that when Sir Basil spoke of Russia he was referring to his stay there from 1888 to 1890?

HE. He did not only speak of his stay there, but of a son.

I. But suppose his lawyers say that those body marks of which you speak—that is, if they really do exist on his body—you heard of from that unfaithful servant in 1913, who took your money and gave away his private telephone number?

HE. Then I shall bring witnesses to prove that I knew about them long before that, I have been looking for him since I was sixteen and I often mentioned these marks.

I. Could you really produce those witnesses?

HE. I can find them. I will find them. And I shall prove by my blood that he is my father. Let them test his blood and mine.

I. Investigation into blood groups can prove only that a person is *not* the son of a particular man. And then only under definite conditions. And only if the blood group of the mother is also known.

HE. But I am in the right! I am in the right!

That last outburst echoed in my ears for hours after I had left him.

But let us get back to our investigation, back to Constantinople, back to the "gap" of 1865 to 1870. Whether the existence of such a gap is sufficiently proved by what has been produced as evidence, I leave the reader to decide. And if it is proved, is the story of Mr. Hyman Barnett Zaharoff to be used to let us fill it? Let the reader again judge. Manel Sahar—the difference in the Christian name Mr. Hyman explains by saying that here it is a matter of a Jewish name which is quite different from the name on the official birth certificate—this Manel Sahar can quite easily have deserted from the Russian army

or been discharged, and once again bobbed up in Constantinople in 1870. Here there is a certain psychological verisimilitude; we find in Sir Basil a decided tendency to get out of a place which he does not like with a certain celerity. Mr. Hyman's story of a stay by his father in Siberia—that in Russia is equivalent to saying that he was a convict—can be very plausibly linked up to the "policeman-murder complex" to which we shall be turning our attention almost immediately. And when Mr. Hyman in his childhood memories speaks of how his father made a passing reappearance when he was six or seven—this was the occasion when Haje Elka Karolinski obtained a separation—that once again coincides in a way that certainly gives one furiously to think with the fact that in the year 1874 or 1875 Basil Zaharoff disappeared from the place where he was then living, Athens, without leaving a trace, lived we do not know where, and some months later appeared again. We shall come to that, too, later on.

There is only one thing certain, and that is that in 1870 Basil Zaharoff was once again in Constantinople. And now we come to what is perhaps the most adventurous part of an adventurous youth, to Zaharoff's "murder of a policeman."

Let us take the tales first. They are fairly widespread wherever there are Greeks and Turks, and they differ only in detail. I shall set them out in two versions, in that of Sir Basil's colleague in the Fire Brigade, the beggar H., and in that of the Greek Banker Ch.

It will be remembered that I did not take down *verbatim* what H. said. I have already mentioned what he said about "the flight of 1865." In connection with the real "murder complex," I find an entry in my diary which I reproduce without change:

An *Arabian Nights'* tale. Quaint old villain in a brothel. Alleges that the armaments man Z. was a colleague of his in

the Fire Brigade in Constantinople. Z. after some trouble or other disappeared for some years. Asked that I'd be discreet. Gave him a tip and then he spun the yarn as enthusiastically as the storyteller of legend. Zaharoff had done a bit of burglary on the occasion of a fire in his uncle's premises. Was put in gaol, made a rope out of his blankets and got away. Plenty of plausible detail, e.g. an old fellow, a "lifer," was in gaol with Zaharoff, wouldn't risk escaping with him, had money but was a miserly devil and wouldn't give it. Finally lent Zaharoff five francs and got a receipt for them. Zaharoff didn't get out of the gaol, but got into the office and stole the documents in his case. Had then to wait until the gates were opened in the morning. Shot down the policeman who opened them, got on board an English ship, thus got to England and became a millionaire ! All the Greeks are proud of the villainies of their national heroes.

Now let us come to the other witness, the banker Ch. Ch. is an old man, a Greek by nationality, who lives in Paris. A friend who heard that I was interested in Sir Basil brought us together. "He can tell you all you want to know ; he is Sir Basil's oldest friend ; he was in the primary school with him in Athens." Anyone who has read what has been already written can imagine with what excitement I looked forward to the meeting. Primary school in Athens, thought I ; then Sir Basil is not content with four birthplaces ; he wants five. The meeting was a little disillusioning. When the old gentleman saw that I already knew something, he didn't feel so happy and denied that he had ever said that he was at school with Sir Basil. "I only got to know him," he said, "when we were both grown-up." When, where, how ? It came out that Ch. had once been at dinner with Sir Basil in the company of the Prime Minister Venizelos and some others. "Would you describe Sir Basil to me ?" I asked in a friendly tone. He scented a trap and coldly advised me to get a photograph if I wanted to know what Sir Basil looked like. But we soon got on good terms again and he began to talk. Of course, he began

with the rather original request that I should not mention his name. I promised. Then at last he began:

HE. Basil Zaharoff broke into his uncle's strong-box in Constantinople and stole from it. He was arrested and held for investigation, and he would have been let out on bail but he could not find the money, and his family too turned against him. Then Zaharoff escaped by the roof having made a rope out of his sheet. In order to get to the roof he had to force open the lead sheets with his pocket knife. When he was searched, the pocket knife was overlooked; it was in his overcoat. When he was leaving the house he ran into a policeman. To save himself he stuck the knife into the policeman's ribs. Thus he got to England, and from that moment, as you can imagine, he couldn't go back to Turkey. Hence his hate of the Turks.

I. How did you know all this, Mr. Ch.?

HE. He said so himself.

I. He told you at that dinner?

HE (very excited). He did not tell it to me, but to a Russian Grand Duke who was my client, and the latter told it to me.

I. Might I ask the name of the Grand Duke?

HE. No, I'm sorry.

I. And how long is it since Sir Basil told this story?

HE. Oh, a good long time ago. It must have been about 1880 or 1890.

I. And do you think the story is true?

HE. He most certainly did somebody in.

I. Are you a Venizelist, Mr. Ch.?

HE. Of course I'm a Venizelist.

So far Ch. Here again I had the story of the murder of a policeman by Zaharoff combined with the robbing of his kinsman's strong-box. With the story of my vain attempt to get the documents—for there must have been documents—from the archives of the Criminal Court in Constantinople I

will not trouble the reader. I was already aware that documents concerning Zaharoff have a trick of disappearing into thin air, so that the mere absence of documents did not seem to be any proof of Zaharoff's innocence. My next step was to get information about the prison in Constantinople to which people held for investigation were taken in 1870, to find out whether it was possible to escape by the roof, that is by a roof in which sheets of metal were used. I was laughed at ; the thing was fantastical. None the less I had the murder story told me again in a third, fourth, and fifth version, and in almost the same detail. It became ever clearer to me that all this must have sprung from a common source, and that common source the truth. Then actually Sir Basil Zaharoff had committed a murder and had caused the documents to disappear !

I was on a false trail. I do not want to be credited with a feat that is not mine ; I have to thank a friend for the solution. I told him about this persistent and insoluble tale of murder in connection with Zaharoff ; I told him both versions as I have told them here, and he laughed and said, "It's pure Casanova."

I. What do you mean ?
HE. His flight over the lead roof.

He was just joking. He had no more recollection of the exact details of that part of Casanova's memoirs than I had. He had only risked a jest because of the expressions "flight by the roof" and "sheets of lead," and I didn't pay much attention to it. It was months later when I chanced in an odd moment of leisure to turn over the page of the Venetian's autobiography. I hit on his "flight over the lead roofs of Venice"—you will find it in the fifth volume of the twelve-volume edition—and to my utter amazement I read :

I. I got to the covering of the roof which was all of lead.

I got my knife between the lower edge and the lead sheet and was able to loosen the latter.

2. I spent four hours cutting up bedclothes, coverlet, mattress, and straw mattress to make a rope.

3. I asked him to lend me thirty sequins. The old man impressed upon me that I didn't need any money to escape, that he had none, that if anything happened to me the money would be lost, anything and everything to cover his miserliness. Finally, weeping bitterly, I asked if he couldn't spare me two sequins. He gave them to me with the request to acknowledge my debt to him. . . .

4. . . . with recesses full of papers. Here were the archives. I was in the ducal chancellery. I opened the desk and found the copy of a letter. . . .

5. I took my knife and I uttered a prayer to God that the man who opened the door would offer no resistance, for if he did I should have to stick him with my knife, and I had made up my mind to do it.

These five passages were enough. Compare them with the salient portions of the story of the beggar H. and the banker Ch. They agree exactly. (And they also agree in an important point with a report in the *Mikra Ephemeris* of Athens of 1874 which, in order not to complicate things too much, I will deal with in its own place.) In other words, it is maintained that Zaharoff had lived a part of Casanova's memoirs !

That is the first point. The next is perhaps even more important. Wherein do the two stories differ ? Wherein do the reports of H. and Ch. depart from their model, the Casanova memoirs ?

1. H. talks of a "robbery of business premises" ; Ch. of "a robbery from the strongbox of his uncle." There is nothing about these in Casanova.

2. H. talks of "a flight to an English ship" ; Ch. says "thus he got to England." There is nothing of that in Casanova.

3. Ch. says : "He was held for investigation and they would

have let him out on bail, but he could not find the money and his family, too, turned against him." Of that Casanova knows as little as about the pocket knife which was "overlooked when he was searched ; it was in his overcoat."

As our investigation proceeds we shall see that the elements in this fantastic tale of a murder and an escape, which are not taken from Casanova, possess a very important kernel of truth. What can we say then ? This without doubt, that someone took a collection of incidents which in their original form were probably credible and not very creditable, and with the help of a "romantic element" which somehow he came across, wove them into a tale of sheer fantasy. Or let us be more tender with him : he reduced them to a good tale. And took so long in touching it all up that the whole thing, facts and fantasies and chance discoveries, formed a whole whose elements it was impossible to disentangle and which was perfectly incredible, to any reasonable person.

Who did all that ? We have the testimony of the banker Ch. ; Zaharoff was the original teller of the tale. And he told it to a Grand Duke whose name I was not allowed to learn. But we may hear of him again when we come to deal with Sir Basil's life in St. Petersburg in the years 1888 to 1890. Then he was—according to Baroness P.—playing the part of a "lady-killer," the part of a "Casanova." Then he made the Venetian's memoirs his own. A desire to make oneself interesting, an operation which he combined with a steady attempt to cover his tracks. A man alleges that he has committed a murder so that people will no longer trouble about the robbery of a relative, or whatever else it was which he has mentioned *en passant*. Do not let us be led astray by this cunning manœuvre, and let us examine a little more closely this lesser crime.

How does the case stand here ? Is that, too, in spite of everything, just another invention ? Here we can go to work with a greater assurance, for here Sir Basil has presented us with an accredited "confession." He is an able fighter against publicity,

and in his fight he has always a second line of defence to which he can retire if the front line gets too dangerous. That is what happened in Athens in 1873–74. His murder story recoiled fourfold on his head, a Press campaign was started against him; he began to feel the ground go under his feet. Then he fled to his protector, Skuludis, who later was Premier, and told him "the whole truth." Skuludis did not keep this "whole truth" to himself, and Lewinsohn, to whose biography Skuludis wrote an introduction, reproduces it. I quote textually:

I was requested by a maternal uncle in Constantinople (Sewastopoulos) to enter his business. He was a man of weak constitution and his numerous illnesses limited his commercial activity. I endeavoured to take his place and to look after his interests whenever I could. I worked most zealously day after day, and so it came about that I soon represented him in most matters concerned with the administration of the business.

My work turned out extremely profitable for my uncle. At the end of the first year I was able to submit to him a balance-sheet which showed a considerable net profit. My uncle acknowledged this, praised me for my zeal and business acumen, and entrusted me with the commercial administration of his firm. A second year went by. The balance sheet which I drew up at the end of this year showed a considerable increase in the net profits. I then received from my uncle a letter in which he thanked me most warmly for the good results and at the same time made me his partner. I was to participate in the profits of the business with a commission of so and so much per cent.

After some months had passed I expected my uncle to give me something on account of my commission, but my hope was vain and I received nothing. Towards the end of the third year of my activities I requested him to fulfil his obligations and pay me my commission. He again refused. He thus deliberately violated the contract which he had given me in writing. He failed to fulfil his promise.

In these circumstances it appeared to me impossible to work for him any longer. I resolved to leave the firm in which I was

thus deprived of the rewards of my labour, but I considered myself justified in taking the sum my uncle owed me from our commission account, for after all I was his partner. I acted in accordance with my decision, and drawing up an exact statement of the balance in my favour, withdrew the amount from the safe and went to England to set up on my own. First, however, I informed my uncle. I wrote him in due form that I was retiring from his firm since he had not fulfilled his obligations, and that I had collected my outstanding commission.

When my uncle received this letter he fell into a rage. He knew, of course, that his business had only been resuscitated by my efforts, and that my departure meant a severe loss to him, so he wanted to take his revenge. He brought an accusation against me, and since I was no longer subject to Turkish justice he pursued me through the English judicial authorities, finding no means too expensive to make me feel his anger and his power.

At first he succeeded. I was asked to go to a police station in London and the indictment was read to me which had been drawn up in Constantinople. I was accused of embezzlement and fraud. The charges brought against me by my uncle appeared to the authorities to be plausible. Circumstances were against me. I had left Constantinople suddenly, and the last letter I had written to my uncle confirmed the fact that I had taken money from the safe of our business. I had no means of proving my innocence and the legality of what I had done, for I had lost the only document on which I could base my claims, namely, the letter in which my uncle had made me a partner in the firm. All my explanations and assertions were of no avail; I was not believed; I was arrested and put in prison to await trial.

Weeks and months went by. Finally the day was fixed for the trial. The lawyers whom my uncle had engaged in London appeared after all to be not too sure of their ground. They requested him to appear in London at the trial to corroborate the charges against me on oath. And indeed my uncle did not mind paying for his revenge. In the midst of winter he undertook the long journey from Constantinople to England and

appeared in London in time for the trial. The day approached. I still did not know how I was to prove my innocence to the court, for my uncle's letter which would have immediately eliminated all doubt could not be found. If my uncle were to take it upon himself to commit perjury and the court believed him, I was lost.

All my ponderings did not help me. The warder opened the door of my cell and ordered me to follow him to the court. The English winter is severe and the morning when my case was to be tried was particularly cold. I had in my trunk a warm cloak which I had not worn for a considerable time. I put it on, for I was unaware that accused persons in England are not taken to the court through the open streets. Instead of this, the warder led me through a long subterranean passage which connected the prison with the court-house. The passage was damp and musty and the wintry cold pierced all my joints. I wrapped myself tightly in my cloak and buried my hands deep in the pockets.

My fingers touched a paper. I looked at it—and gave a shout of joy. It was my uncle's letter in which he appointed me his partner—the very letter that had gone astray for so long and for which I had sought everywhere in vain. I could now appear in court with a tranquil mind, for I was sure of my case. My uncle was already sitting there with his lawyers. There were some journalists and a few curious spectators. Then came the judges. Thus the case was tried and the question of guilt decided with full publicity.

The chairman of the court first of all asked my uncle what was his accusation. My uncle replied that I had stolen his money and absconded with it to England. The chairman ordered me to reply to my uncle's charges. I replied that I was innocent ; that my uncle had appointed me his partner and that this justified me in having recourse to the safe and withdrawing the money that was due to me. This concluded the interrogations. The statements were again opposed, as in the preliminary examination, and it all depended on whether the court gave more credence to my uncle or to me. Although the chairman did his best to extract the truth, circumstances were against

me, for I was the accused, and as a matter of course it was supposed that I would tell lies to help myself. My uncle, however, appeared in the capacity of witness, and therefore had to make his statement under oath. And so it was. The chairman raised the Bible which lay on the table in front of him, held it out to my uncle, and directed him to swear on the gospels that he had told the truth and nothing but the truth.

In the court there was dead silence. Everyone felt that my fate would be decided at this moment. I myself was still unwilling to believe that my uncle would let himself be carried by his hatred of me so far as to swear a false oath. But he was actually about to testify to his statement. I then turned to the chairman and cried out, "Mr. Chairman, do not permit him to take the oath, for he will certainly commit perjury !"

There was the greatest excitement in court. My uncle appeared to be thunderstruck. All eyes were suddenly directed at me. The chairman broke off the preparations for taking the oath, and asked me in a severe tone what I meant by such an interruption. I told him the truth—that a few minutes ago I had found my uncle's letter, with his own signature, appointing me his partner. With these words I handed the paper which I had discovered in the pocket of my cloak to the chairman. He examined it, but naturally he could not decipher it since it was written in Greek. He directed the Greek interpreter who was present at the trial to translate it into English. The wording of the letter was so clear that there could be no quibble as to its meaning.

The chairman asked my uncle a final question as he held the letter in front of him—"Is this your signature ?"—and my uncle, though he had just been ready to deny everything on oath, broke down completely and was obliged to acknowledge the genuineness of the letter and the signature. In order to make quite certain the chairman put my uncle on oath in regard to this statement. This concluded the trial. The court ordered that I should be set free immediately.

Let us be precise. This is not the actual text of Zaharoff's confession—it was not made in writing in any case—but a

text produced by Skuludis from memory and handed over to Lewinsohn. We must read what Skuludis has himself to say :

I made the acquaintance of Basil Zaharoff about fifty years ago in Athens. He was young, enterprising, and intelligent, but opinion about him was divided in Athens society at that time. Some treated him with the mistrust with which the most disreputable individuals are regarded, while others thought him a victim of malicious misunderstanding. Basil Zaharoff had just then come from a trial in London, where he had emerged as the moral victor from a scandal disseminated by ill-informed or evil-minded persons. I took the trouble at the time to investigate carefully the records and the reports of the trial in the English newspapers, and to study all the details of the affair which led his calumniators to spread their scandalous stories about Zaharoff.

Since then our personal relations have developed most cordially, and I must confess that I have read with increasing astonishment the untruths, inaccuracies, and malicious reports which have been published in the newspapers about the origins, the past, the achievements, and the character of Basil Zaharoff by whose friendship I am honoured.

A pleasant picture, this manly and sympathetic defence of a friend maligned, a friend who has so frankly confessed the little sins and faults of youth, sins so easily pardoned. And note also how trouble was taken to test it all by reference to the documents in the case and the reports in the English newspapers. When we get to this second line of defence there is now no mention of the romantic episodes of murder and escape. But we cannot take this testimony either at its face value, and our surest appeal is, perhaps, to our old friend Ro., the agent of princes, who as an expert in Eastern story-telling has already told us his opinion of the pleasant stories of Sir Basil's youthful occupations.

After I had told him about the testimony given by Zaharoff himself he began as follows :

In the first place there is a sad absence of previous history. The story really begins in the year 1870. At that time Zaharoff was in Constantinople, according to one version a "guide," according to another a *hamal*, that is to say, a porter at the harbour. This at least is certain, that he had turned traitor to the clothing trade and that his activities were regarded as rather compromising to the family. Something had to be done. One day Zaharoff's uncle, Antoniades, his mother's brother, who was a cunning little Greek trader in Galata, fell ill. There was a risk that he would have to close down his business, for Uncle Antoniades was head of the firm, cashier, and counter-hand all in one. The family came to the rescue and proposed that he should take his nephew Basileos into the shop. Basil was a hefty fellow, shrewd, spoke every language that was necessary—Greek, Turkish, Spanish, English, French, Russian. He didn't want any wages. He would sleep on the premises and take his meals in the little eating-house close by. The Galata shop was in one of the small side streets between the Customs House and the Rue de Galata, and not more than a stone's throw away from Galata's "pleasure centre." Basil took on the job without more ado. He had been having some slight trouble with the police these days, and besides the competition in his profession was so fierce that he thought it was high time that he threw it up.

He worked very hard at his uncle's business. He was a magnificent hand at haggling ; he was a good buyer, and after a year of him his uncle told him that he would be glad to guarantee him a share of the profits for the further years of his service with him, if the increase in profits was maintained. Now Sir Basil alleges that he greatly increased the turnover, that his uncle would not pay him his share, that he, Basil, then decided to resign his post. He himself reckoned up what was owed him, took that amount out of the till and went off to London. That isn't the uncle's story, and the Greeks of Constantinople who even now relate the affairs of the Zaharoff family in all sorts of spicy detail give a very different account of what happened. According to them Basil Zaharoff had never been his uncle's partner, but was just an employee. Basil Zaharoff had long

been obsessed with the idea of escaping into the big world outside. But how was a Greek employee to get the four or five hundred francs that were needed ? Even in the safe in his uncle's shop there was no such sum during the owner's absence. No Greek shopkeeper ever keeps his money on the premises. But there were in the shop various bales of woven and other cloth. Basil Zaharoff got as much as he could of it out of the shop, went off to Galata Tscharschia where auctions are held and put up one bale after the other. After he had got in about a thousand francs he got on board a ship and shook the dust of Constantinople off his shoes.

When Uncle Antoniades got back to his shop at the end of September, he found the pillaged premises shut up and the neighbours told him that for a fortnight no one had seen his nephew, Basil Zaharoff. He inquired of the family in Tatavla, but they too had no news. Basil's parents assured him that he had disappeared one day without saying anything to anybody. Constantinople rumour has it that the family knew very well that Basil had bolted from his home town, that the family were in the know all the time, and they were quite calm in the belief that Basil having got to London had nothing to fear. That the Constantinople police should track him to London didn't seem likely.

But they had forgotten about the wonderful information service that the Greeks had organized. The Greeks are one big family. If anything happens in the Greek colony in Trieste, the Greeks in New York know all about it, just as do the Greeks in Smyrna or Paris. Very soon Uncle Antoniades heard from a Greek friend in Manchester that his nephew had turned up in the Greek quarter in London and was feverishly trying to make a living. It cost the victimized uncle a couple of pounds gold to get the Constantinople authorities to take the case up in London. At the instance of the police of Stambul, Basil Zaharoff was one day arrested in London and charged with theft; damages demanded—10,000 francs. The uncle had assessed the value of his goods much higher than the auction harpies of Galata Tscharschia.

The arrest of Basil Zaharoff naturally was very soon known

in Constantinople. If the injured uncle had stabbed or shot his errant nephew no one in the Greek colony would have bothered very much. But that he should deliver up his nephew to foreigners, that was an offence against the Greek sense of national solidarity. He was threatened with bloody revenge; his windows were broken; he got anonymous letters, and literally went in fear of his life. But proceedings had already begun. Uncle Antoniades would willingly have all the coil undone. The family persuaded him to go himself to London. Things looked bad for Basil Zaharoff. The accusation and the sworn testimony of the injured uncle were already in the hands of the English court when Mr. Antoniades arrived in London.

Now we get to the story of that dramatic day in court and of the letter. You don't need to have an Oriental imagination to know how the letter got there. The uncle had to get his nephew out of the hole, for if Basil Zaharoff got put into gaol for a couple of years, then Uncle Antoniades might as well consider his own death-warrant signed. In a crisis like this his lawyer had to advise him how to make his nephew's innocence plausible. A letter—ante-dated—was written and a way was found to get it into the hands of the accused. All that happened just at the last minute, which can be explained by the fact that the uncle had got to London only three days before the trial. The marvellous tale of the letter unexpectedly turning up in the overcoat pocket is just blah. But of course Sir Basil would not give away a cunning trick like that.

This time, too, I have given Ro.'s evidence verbatim, so as to let the reader judge for himself. Now there is statement against statement. Which is correct? For those who know all the circumstances, Ro.'s version—although it, too, is not free from a certain Oriental embellishment—sounds distinctly more credible than Zaharoff's testimony. One has only to read again that dramatic tale of the London trial. On the other hand, I had to say to myself that there was a certain credibility about the Zaharoff story. Had not the Greek Premier, Skuludis, himself personally studied the documents in the case and the

reports in the London newspapers? And Lewinsohn, too, writes that Zaharoff's story would sound fantastic "were not the course of the trial known to be, by reports in the London newspapers, on the whole as he describes it." Whose, then, is the true story ? Ro.'s or Zaharoff's *cum* Skuludis and Lewinsohn ?

There was nothing for it but to betake myself to the Old Bailey in London, where the trial took place. If I could rely on the chronological table which I had worked out from all the other dates which Zaharoff supplies, the incident must have happened in 1875 ; 1875, then. Find mention of the release of a Zacharias Basileos Zaharoff. Or find the name cited in connection with that of the uncle whose name is officially given as Sewastopoulos, a name by which, if Ro. is to be believed, Antoniades very probably was also known, a connection arising out of accountancy differences in a particular business relationship. There was nothing to be found. I had had the foresight to have the registers of 1874 and 1876 at my hand. I looked for Sewastopoulos, Antoniades, Zaharoff, and, as a precaution, Zacharias ; yes, even Zahar and Zohar—nothing. Then I remembered something Ro. had said to me, and how he and a French politician had together searched the archives of the Old Bailey for the documents, and had not found them. Then there were now two possibilities. Either this document too, like so many Zaharoff documents, had totally disappeared or my work of literary detection *plus* my analysis of "the murder complex" was worthless, and even the portions of it which I had alleged must have a substratum of truth in them were invented or, like the story of the flight over the lead roofs, came from sources which still remained unknown to me. Once again my investigations had just petered out.

I was ready to give the whole thing up, but a young collaborator of mine in my London researches was luckily cleverer than I, and undertook the difficult task of pushing investigation a little further. She quickly made a discovery.

Under the date January 13, 1873, she found the following entry in the register of the Old Bailey :

61. Zacharoff Zacharia Basilius, agent pledging goods entrusted to him for sale.

Once again I was on the trail ; I had simply let myself be led off it by wrong time-data. Or was I now on the trail of another case altogether which had escaped Sir Basil's watchful eye ? The phrase "agent pledging goods entrusted to him for sale" was rather difficult to reconcile with Sir Basil's story that he had robbed the strongbox of his uncle Sewastopoulos, or, if you like, Antoniades, and declared that he regarded the money he took as his share of profits. But perhaps we could combine the two. Then the apparent discrepancy would have arisen from the malicious accusations of the uncle athirst for revenge, who sought to land his nephew and partner in gaol, and later so ignominiously broke down when he was taking the oath that the English court—— Let us quote Zaharoff again : "My uncle broke down completely and was obliged to acknowledge the genuineness of his signature. And the court ordered that I should be set free immediately." It must be the same. I could not see the documents of the Old Bailey case and, if I had seen them, I would not have been able to quote them. But there should be accounts in the English papers of the case. Had not both Skuludis and Lewinsohn read them ? A fresh search began and a new discovery was made. Here are the reports of which Skuludis and Lewinsohn speak as supporting Sir Basil's story :

. . . There were also three cases of manslaughter, the circumstances of which the Deputy Recorder related in detail. He next referred briefly to the case of Zacharia Basileos Zacharoff, a Greek, who stands charged with illegally pledging merchandise of very considerable value, the property of a merchant at Constantinople, with which he had been intrusted. This had been made illegal by statute and probably the Grand

Jury under the circumstances would have no difficulty in finding a true bill. There was also a more serious case against . . . (*The Times*, Jan. 14, 1873.)

Excellent! Now we were getting at what really happened, and now it will become evident that this "merchant of Constantinople," the cloth dealer and Uncle Sewastopoulos-Antoniades, had lied and his nephew and partner had been perfectly justified in digging into the till. Or was it possible that he had not dug into the till, but had just put a few bales of cloth up to auction in order to get what was owed him? If so, then it seemed to prove that Ro. was the better-informed of the witnesses. I went on with the investigations, and in *The Times* of Friday, January 17, 1873, I found the following:

CRIMINAL COURT

Zacharia Basilius Zacharoff, 22, was indicted for that he, being an agent intrusted by one Manuel Hiphentides of Constantinople, merchant, for the purpose of sale with possession, among other goods, 25 cases of gum and 169 sacks of gall of the value together of £1,000, did unlawfully and without any authority from his principal, for his own use make a deposit of the said goods as and by way of pledge.

Mr. Straight appeared for the prosecution and Mr. Tindal Atkinson for the defence.

The circumstances of the case were reported at length when the prisoner was before the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House.

Mr. Atkinson applied that the thousand franc note found in the possession of the prisoner might be handed over to his solicitor in order that he might be able to bring from Constantinople a witness material to the defence, and that the case might be postponed until the next session.

Mr. Straight opposed the application and stated the circumstances under which the charge had been brought against the prisoner.

Affidavits on both sides having been put in—

The Deputy Recorder said he usually looked upon such

applications with favour, but in this case he was not satisfied that he ought to make the order asked for.

Subsequently by advice of his counsel the prisoner withdrew his plea of "Not Guilty" and pleaded "Guilty."

Mr. Straight said that he had communicated with his learned friend, and he proposed to his lordship to refrain from passing sentence till next session. He anticipated that in the interim certain things would be done which would enable him to ask his lordship to pass only a nominal sentence upon the prisoner —namely, that he might be liberated on his own recognizances to appear for judgment when called upon.

Mr. Atkinson said the prisoner was a foreigner and was quite unaware of the Act of Parliament under which the indictment had been framed and he hoped the course indicated by his learned friend would be pursued.

The Deputy Recorder consented to the application and judgment was accordingly postponed.

Let us stop here. There is something wrong, surely. We have already said that this Zacharia Basilius Zacharoff on this occasion in 1873 was twenty-two instead of twenty-four. But how has the wicked uncle transformed himself into this Manuel Hiphentides who, so far as we know, was no relation to Basil Zaharoff? Then Zaharoff was not the partner of his uncle, but of a man unrelated to him? Have we come across the name Hiphentides already? If we look back we shall find that "the rich man of the Phanar," who, it is alleged, had the young Zaharoff educated until he was eighteen at the English mission school, this patron whose existence we rather doubted, was called Iphestidi. Perhaps his name more correctly spelled was Hiphentides. And did Sir Basil atone in some measure for the minor offence which he committed against this worthy man by embezzling 25 boxes of gum and 169 sacks of gallnuts, by transforming him at least in his later accounts into a noble protector, a Mæcenas? Here we have a thread in our hands, but it breaks once again.

Twenty-five boxes of gum and 169 sacks of gallnuts—how

did these get into a clothdealer's shop? Has this whole affair actually nothing whatever to do with Basil Zaharoff's activities in his uncle's shop? I should not like to make too hasty a statement or to be so petty as to trouble overmuch about names and types of goods. But so far the circumstances and course of the case have no resemblance at all to Sir Basil's "testimony." Still, the case was not yet finished. There was still the possibility that Sir Basil *cum* Skuludis and Lewinsohn told the truth, and that that dramatic affair of the oath and the letter in which the uncle, Antoniades-Sewastopoulos, shared—or, if you will, the partner, principal, and benefactor, Hiphentides—would be found in the sequel to these proceedings. So I went on to trace the case to its end. But the end was disillusion. I could only find one more mention of it in the English Press.

Zacharia Basilius Zacharoff, a Greek, aged 22, described as a merchant who had been convicted at the previous session of unlawfully pledging goods of great value which had been intrusted to him for a special purpose, was called up to receive judgment.

Mr. Straight said, addressing the bench, the prisoner being a foreigner the complainant was now disposed to put the most favourable construction on his conduct. That being so, he suggested that the prisoner should be now allowed to go at large on his own recognizances and be required to come up for judgment when called upon.

Mr. H. Tindal Atkinson, the prisoner's counsel, assented to that course.

The Deputy Recorder reminded the prisoner that at the close of the trial at last session the statements were made which induced him to postpone sentence in order to afford the prisoner an opportunity of making compensation for the wrong that had been inflicted on the prosecutor, and he was now told the prisoner had made an offer to do so. He ordered the prisoner to enter into his own recognizances in £100 to come up for judgment if called upon.

The prisoner entered into the stipulated recognizances and was therefore liberated. (*The Times*, Feb. 4, 1874.)

The position now has become clear at last. We must take final leave of all the fine drama of the letter in the overcoat and the attempted perjury of the wicked uncle. Here our sceptical friend Ro. has been well worthy of confidence. Uncle and cloth—that does not tally. Much more credible is this Mr. Hiphentides and his very different wares. Partner? —of that, too, there is no trace. The young man embezzled the goods, and Mr. Hiphentides had him arrested in London. But here comes the rub. What did Ro. say? "His uncle was threatened with bloody revenge; his windows were broken; he got anonymous letters and literally went in fear of his life." And now what does the somewhat *jejune* report in the English paper say? The plaintiff asked that the accused "should be dealt with as leniently as possible." And if he (the uncle) did not exactly come to London to smuggle a forged letter into the overcoat of the accused, his generosity, for which he was rewarded by Zaharoff with the tax-free promotion to be the noble Mæcenas of his youth, was he still big enough to ask that the young miscreant be left off? Not at all. He was content with letting him be bound over on security with the obligation "to come up for judgment if called upon."

Zaharoff put up the money—and disappeared. Take this extract from a conversation with the former Premier of Greece, D:

I. And 1873?

HE. In 1873 Zaharoff suddenly disappeared from Athens. For about two months.

I. Only for two months?

HE. Yes. He was in hiding. He had to wait until his lawyers settled something for him in London. Till then he could not go back to England.

I. What was this something?

HE. I'm afraid I have forgotten.

Before we go on, let us spend still a moment or two on this murder-flight-embezzlement complex and go over again our annals of crime. Have we really got the solution of all the problems which Zaharoff himself has set and got to the bottom of the eye-witness stories supplied by so many, and especially by fireman H. and the banker Ch. ? Let us remember how, after we had excluded the Casanova elements, there still remained data which at first seemed incomprehensible and which certainly had no connection with the Venetian's memoirs, and how we undertook out of that which remained to reconstruct the real course of events. We should have proof by example if this surplus could now be completely fitted into what we know to be the real framework of the case.

H. speaks of a "robbery of the shop," Ch. of "a breaking into his uncle's strongbox." That has been already fully discussed.

H. speaks of "a flight on an English ship." Ch. says "thus he got to England." Here, too, there is nothing more to say.

But what about Ch.'s story : "He was held for investigation and was let out on bail, but he could not put up the money, and the family, too, turned against him" ? Here we find mention of what we had no record of until our London discovery—mention of bail. Anyone who is acquainted with the true way to deal with such documents knows that all that means this : He could not find security and could not get out of prison because his family turned against him. But evidently the family turned to him again—and also exercised a certain delicate pressure on Mr. Manuel Hiphentides. The result ? The security was forthcoming, and he was released. Thus a confirmation of the declarations of Ro. and—if that is necessary really—of the reports in *The Times*. There is only one little inconsistency ; that prison where he languished, which for very good reasons we were unable to find in Constantinople, was actually in London. Certainly it has not a lead roof, but we need not trouble ourselves on that point.

What, then, is left? Ch. can tell us of Zaharoff's pocket-knife which was "overlooked when he was searched," and which he "finally found in his overcoat." A detail, trivial in itself, but in investigations of this kind it is well never to ignore such details casually. We must not think of the concept "pocket-knife" but of the context. The context sounds familiar to us. Instead of the pocket-knife there appears another notable exhibit, to wit, the letter—and, almost word for word, Zaharoff's marvellous tale of the discovery of the letter that secured him freedom. The change of scene from London to Constantinople is made here also, and is typical.

All the surplus data has now been put in its place and the proof supplied by example. The results agree.

They agree, and yet they do not quite agree as we shall have to admit finally in spite of everything. One point remains to be cleared up. We have left it unconsidered so far, but we cannot rightly leave it so. In our investigation we found this fundamental formula, that "what is not in Casanova is true," and we have found it confirmed even down to verbal coincidence. But there is still one element which is not in Casanova, and we have up to now ignored it. That is the murder. Recall that the man who was escaping from the prison had to wait until the door was opened in the morning and then, in H.'s words, "he shot down the policeman as he opened it." Or as Ch. tells it: "In order to save himself he had to stick the knife in the ribs of the policeman." In Casanova the story is different. There it is said:

. . . I saw a man with a great key in his hand coming to the stairs. I took my *sponton* [dagger] and placed myself at the door so that, as soon as it opened, I could get out and reach the stairs. I uttered a prayer to God that the man would not offer any resistance, for if he did I should be compelled to hew him down, and I had made up my mind to do it.

The door opened and at the sight of me the poor fellow stood as if turned to stone. Without stopping, without uttering

a word, I took advantage of his bewilderment and bolted down the stairs.

What about that? What can we do here to complete our epic? Only the escape from the prison is in Casanova; there is not a word about a murder. If we follow our formula which has hitherto been successfully applied, then it stands out clear and plain; somewhere, sometime, somehow, Zaharoff killed a policeman. Remember the end of the conversation with Ch.

I. And do you believe the story is true?
HE. He certainly did someone in.
I. Are you a Venizelist, Mr. Ch.?
HE. Of course I am a Venizelist.

But we are not Venizelists. And we can only say that for this murder by Basil Zaharoff there is not that exact proof which a conscientious investigator would silently accept. And if we look at things scientifically, we must simply also state that we have here only a piece of *literary* indication and circumstantial evidence, which we are neither able nor willing to take as the truth. Nor is there any need.

We have a thread in our hands, but we have ourselves broken it.

Where did Basil Zaharoff go after his release from the London prison? We have learned this from Premier D.— to Athens. Under the circumstances, a return to Constantinople would have been much too risky a venture. Here we are, then, in Athens in 1873. What did that city look like in that year? There there dwells a very shrewd folk, very much inclined to take advantage of its neighbour, and so a very distrustful folk, of hard and daring traders, whose destiny it was to set up their houses and shops right on the ruins of a great civilization. Generally speaking, Athens of that day had the atmosphere of the average Turkish town, but as it progressed towards national autonomy and europeanization,

it had lost its Oriental bloom, though not the fundamental Oriental conceptions in public and private life. It was a rather disillusioned Constantinople in little. Here, too, women were almost as carefully guarded as if they were in an Eastern harem. And here, too, this stringent morality had its other side, just as on the opposite coast of the Ægean, just as in the Hellas of Socrates and the *Symposium*. In other words, the "foreigners' guide" had still golden opportunities to make money.

After his adventure in England did Basil Zaharoff become a guide again? Ro. says he did, and if respectable families in Athens boycotted him, it was, according to Ro., because he went back to that profession.

I. Perhaps he was boycotted because news of the London case had reached Athens?

HE. No. Athens isn't London. The deed that had made Zaharoff impossible in London, what was it in Athens? A knavish trick, a clever bit of roguery, pure business acumen! Remember the heroes of Troy. Odysseus, too, would no doubt have embezzled 25 boxes of gum and 169 sacks of gallnuts if Circe had been such a fool as to entrust them to him.

Now we know our Ro. and his peculiar attitude to all that is Greek. The truth probably lies half-way between. The *Internationale Biographische Archiv* of Berlin noted in the section devoted to Zaharoff—that was in 1928 before the books mentioned were published:

He went to Athens and lived there as an employee in a shop and as a barman, and finally could not get employment. A relation of his who was a porter in a hotel recommended Zaharoff, who was extraordinarily gifted as a linguist and even then as a result of his contact with foreigners was master of ten languages, as a guide.

That is somewhat different from Ro.'s account. And that,

in spite of all that is said, the London incident did play a part in the campaign against Zaharoff in Athenian society is indicated by a noteworthy fact. It was the London affair which brought Zaharoff into contact with Skuludis, who later was Premier of Greece.

Who is this Stephen Skuludis who plays so important a part in the life of Basil Zaharoff? He was born in the island of Chios, not far from Smyrna, and later his family went to Constantinople and belonged to the rich circles in the Phanar. There he began to take an interest in the fate of his people, and so had a sure and comfortable political career in front of him. He tried his hand at political journalism. The usefulness of this young man with the many connections with the rich folk of the Phanar became obvious to the statesman Trikoupis. The young man was summoned to Athens, and there found his feet, and was living in great style when Basil Zaharoff, five years his junior, was "barman, then unemployed, and finally guide" in that city.

What brought together the man with the assured career and the unsuccessful, compromised Zaharoff is not quite clear. The rumour factory has been hard at work on this also, but we are wary of rumours. They are the less trustworthy in that they all come from political opponents who want to bring up scandals against the private life of Skuludis, who was loyal to the throne. What does our Venizelist friend the ex-Premier, D., say? "Skuludis was no statesman; he was just a lackey of the king." When I repeated this to Ro., who was strongly sympathetic to the Greek royal house, he said: "That's nonsense. In Athens one could be somebody only if one were a foreign diplomatist—or what that gentleman calls a lackey of the king." Once again it is plain that it is hard to get the truth. The only English testimony which I can find to the character of Skuludis comes from a much later period —the war years. In his disrespectful manner, Mr. Compton Mackenzie writes:

Mr. Skuludis, an octogenarian millionaire, of whose exasperating personality I can perhaps suggest a hint when I say that even Sir Francis Elliot once confessed that in any interview with Skuludis he was seized with an almost irresistible longing to take hold of his long beard and tweak it as hard as he could.

In any case he was then an important and influential person when he invited to his house the young, compromised, but very skilful Zaharoff, who is described at that time as being "a good-looking, tall, blond-haired youth with bright eyes." Skuludis has related—and we may believe him—that at first he had no inkling at all of the nasty stories that were going round about Basil Zaharoff. Later on, these stories came to his ears, and among them must have been the story of the embezzlement case, with all its trimmings of prison, escape, and murder. These tales began to get the better of the young Zaharoff, and then he learned that Skuludis, too, had heard them and was turning from him. But let us go back here, too, to the actual words of the Skuludis–Lewinsohn version.

If in the circumstances he were to lose time, it would be as good as admitting that all the accusations and suspicions were justified. So he made a last attempt to save himself. Zaharoff scraped together from among his papers all the proof he could find from the London period to support his innocence. It was not much. He had neither a written copy of his acquittal nor any document stating that he had been set free from prison, and had not escaped as was rumoured in Athens. He did find a few newspaper clippings of the trial. These he put in his pocket and went straight to Skuludis. . . .

Skuludis, the story goes on, was going to have the young man thrown out, but he cried :

. . . You, my dear Monsieur Skuludis, have also given credence to these infamous suspicions which pursue me everywhere. Good. Listen to the truth. I'll give you a full

account, for you have given me so many proofs of your kindness. Listen to me and judge for yourself.

Zaharoff at once got on with his story :

Objectively, soberly, almost drily, like a police report, he stated his experiences in Constantinople and London. And as proof of what he said he drew the newspaper clippings from his pocket. Skuludis examined them and was finally convinced of his young friend's innocence. Zaharoff had fallen a victim to calumny. He must be supported against his slanderers and the matter cleared up wherever and whenever an opportunity offered.

Here really everything is said. That Basil Zaharoff could not find among his papers the written copy of his acquittal was a piece of bad luck which anyone who has read the account of my investigations will not find surprising. The story of the newspaper clippings Skuludis told shortly before his death, when he was an old man, and we may be indulgent to him. What is clear is that we have here again the story in Zaharoff's "testimony," that testimony which we examined so closely. It is also clear that the friendship between him and Skuludis dated from that hour and that the latter took the trouble to save his protégé's position in Athens. And finally it is clear that all his trouble was in vain. Zaharoff could not fight it out ; he struggled on for some weeks or months and then on a sudden he disappeared.

Disappeared whither ? Zaharoff thought it important to tell us, with a communicativeness that is not very characteristic of him, that he went to England again and went into the textile business.

All that is completely at variance with a story from French sources. Roger Menevée writes that, at that period, Mr. Zaharoff was to be found where the great armament industries were. There are several stories of his working, on the one hand

at Le Creusot, on the other in Krupp's. The *Weekly Dispatch* of October 8, 1922, says :

> After a period of training with Krupp's in Essen he went to Paris and London and began to interest himself in the armaments business.

But this statement in the article in the *Weekly Dispatch*, which otherwise is quite uninformed, is not evidence, and one can ignore it.

The third person who has tried to fill the gap is Mr. Hyman Barnett Zaharoff, the ever-present son. He alleges that at that time Basil Zaharoff was neither in Manchester earning a weekly wage of two pounds nor in Le Creusot or Essen learning how to make cannon. He did disappear from Athens—but he turned up in Wilkomir, which was then in the Russian government of Kovno. His plans for the west had miscarried, so he proposed to resume wedded life with Haje Elka Karolinski. But that lady would have nothing to do with a husband whom she had been told had been "in Siberia." She chased him off, and the marriage was dissolved, according to Jewish law, at Bielsk in the government of Grodno. The son of that marriage was then seven.

Whom is one to believe ? Only this is certain, that Basil Zaharoff did disappear from Athens and remained disappeared for some time. For the events in Athens in the meantime I have as sources only the informants of Lewinsohn, and I must leave it to him to take responsibility for the trustworthiness of their information. The alleged facts are these. While Basil Zaharoff was in some unknown place there appeared in one of Athens "yellow" newspapers, the *Mikra Ephemeris*, the following item :

"The convict Zacharias Basileios Zaharoff had made a sensational attempt to escape from the old prison in Athens called Garbola. But at the moment when he was trying to get away he was shot by a warder." Details were added. The

convict had made elaborate preparations for his attempt. He had a little bag in which he had brought along a rifle in parts which could easily be assembled. To walk noiselessly he had pulled thick socks over his shoes. With the bundle under his arm he climbed up to the roof to escape that way. On the way he got out the rifle and assembled it ready to fire. His escape was already nearly accomplished when a warder in the courtyard saw a man on the roof and ordered him to stay where he was. The fugitive tried to shoot, but the warder was quicker, and laid the convict, Zacharias Basileios Zaharoff, low on the roof.

Here is the sequel of this amazing adventure. The people who had always distrusted Zaharoff were triumphant. They had always known that the fellow was a criminal and now he had properly and finally gone to the devil. Even Skuludis was aghast and rather wounded in his self-esteem because he had let himself be well taken in by the youthful gaolbird. Everyone was ready to consider the case closed, but it opened again. As we may remember, Basil Zaharoff's sisters lived in Constantinople. They read the report in the newspapers about the death of their brother, and they went to Madame Sophie Negropontis, the daughter of a rich gentleman of the Phanar, and this Madame Negropontis telegraphed to Skuludis and asked him to say whether the news in the papers of the shooting of the young Zaharoff on the roof of the prison was true.

Skuludis says that he was already rather doubtful about the truth of the tale. However, he took action now. He went to inquire of the chief of police in Athens, Staikos, and found that he knew nothing of the Zaharoff case. He had indeed had a report from the prison authorities that a convict had been shot while trying to escape and had, as was the custom, been buried next day. As the name of the prisoner was not given in the report and apparently could not be ascertained, Skuludis asked that the body be exhumed, and had his request granted.

Skuludis personally attended the exhumation. He took with him a dentist, who had treated Zaharoff and . . . But let us turn again to Lewinsohn's book. He is too good a writer to have been capable of inventing the following details :

"Even if there is nothing left of the body but the skeleton," declared the dentist, "I shall know whether the teeth are Mr. Zaharoff's, for I stopped them myself. I shall recognize them at a glance."

The expedition began. Equipped with carbolic acid as a protection against any poisonous effects the corpse might have, the two men, Zaharoff's friend and his dentist, went to the cemetery where the dead Basileios was supposed to lie. The grave-digger appeared punctually, and it was an easy matter to clear away the few shovelfuls of earth which had been thrown on the criminal. Soon an unsavoury smell showed that they had struck the right spot. The few days that the dead man had lain beneath the shallow layer of earth had sufficed to bring on decomposition. One more dig with the shovel and the corpse appeared.

Skuludis gazed at the head with its foxy red hair. That could not be Zaharoff, who was fair. Meanwhile the dentist had began his examination. He looked at the teeth for a moment and then gave a cry of triumph : "This is certainly not Zaharoff."

There is no mistaking the Oriental elements in this unsavoury story. One thing is certain. The body exhumed was not Basil Zaharoff's. An investigation was set on foot and it was established that the dead man was a Canadian who had been caught by the harbour police of Piræus in the act of committing a daring robbery on board an Austrian steamer and had been put in prison. Actually he had tried to escape and had been shot while trying. What his name was remains unknown ; the name Zaharoff was first given him in the newspaper story.

We shall not proceed far before we have to cast another glance at the *Mikra Ephemeris* story. Notice the construction

of it. Zaharoff sits in a cell; he breaks out; and over the roof, too; he tries to murder a policeman, but the policeman fires first and kills him. There cannot be any doubt that here—still unassimilated with the Casanova memoirs—is the original form of the legend of the escape from prison which we have had to study so closely. In a word, this newspaper report is only part of the crop of rumours that drove the young Basil Zaharoff from the city. There is a variant. In this case the prisoner does not shoot the policeman, but the policeman the prisoner. An accommodation to the needs of the moment! Did the story of the actual shooting of an unknown convict have to be beaten? Or was the desire of the writer in the paper father to the thought? The editor of the *Mikra Ephemeris* was a certain Stephanos Xenos, a journalist well known in Athens. He had earlier shown himself very unfriendly to Zaharoff and he had done his utmost to get him banned in Athenian society, and now, when his enemy had evacuated the battlefield, did he give him a parting kick by allowing a deception in his paper? Why this enmity beyond the grave? It is said to have been over a love-affair. The two men were rivals, and the young Zaharoff, as Lewinsohn puts it:

> . . . Had just those qualities which make a man popular with the women of the south. With all his reserve, he understood how to assume, when occasion demanded, the tone of a gallant and the bearing of a man of the world, and at the right moment, too, to act as the adventurous seducer.

In short, a "lady-killer"—just as it should be.

Basil Zaharoff was overtaken in Manchester by the news of his own death. That was a signal for him to get back again to Athens. As one risen from the dead he had another chance. Besides, he had been dirtily treated and he meant to have revenge. The story of his vengeance, which obviously comes from his own circle, reads like the pursuit of the Trojans by the avenging Achilles which, if I remember aright, led him

round and round the walls of Troy. Similarly, Mr. Stephanos Xenos was assaulted in his own house by Zaharoff and hunted through all its rooms by the Homeric Zacharias Basileos. It can be imagined that, unlike the *Iliad*, the tale must end with the plea for mercy of the vanquished and magnanimous forgiveness.

Let us stick to facts. The young man returned to Athens and tried his luck there once again. He soon perceived that he had overestimated his chance as a living corpse, at least as far as business was concerned. "Shop employee, then barman, then unemployed, and finally a guide" ; it appears that this once again was the sequence.

But for the last time. Fate was standing across his path. It took the form of a Swedish captain who represented in Athens the English armament firm of Nordenfeldt. The Swede had done good business and was getting a better post than one in a tiny Balkan State. But he had not settled whom he would recommend to succeed him. In the Balkans and especially in the business of selling munitions of war in the Balkans, not the first bright young man sent from London would succeed.

Letters passed between Athens and London and one day the Swede was wired : "Ask Skuludis to recommend someone." He went off with the telegram to Skuludis, who was then already a rich man but still at the beginning of his political career, and felt very honoured by this proof that his fame had reached London. Whether Skuludis, who tells us this, had read the telegram containing his name as carefully as he read the cuttings of Zaharoff's London trial we shall leave undiscussed. At any rate Skuludis was very willing to be helpful. He thought of his protégé Zaharoff, who certainly was no specialist in the armaments trade, but was a bright youth, a good speaker, keen, and undoubtedly not burdened with scruples, which as we shall see later only bring loss in this type of business—in a word, he was the man for the job.

Skuludis told the Swede of the darker patches in his protégé's life, and urged him to make inquiries as to Zaharoff's past of the English, the Greek, and the Turkish authorities, and as to his suitability to become the agent of a munitions firm. The researches cannot have been very profound, for the very next day Zaharoff appeared at his patron's, burst into tears, threw himself—we are dealing with a country where such noble practices are customary—on his knees before his benefactor, and covered his hands with kisses. Then he cried: "The captain has just told me that his firm has appointed me its agent for the whole of the Balkans."

According to a more prosaic version the patron was not Skuludis but a person whom the *Internationale Biographische Archiv* calls "a relative of Zaharoff who was a hotel porter in Athens." This seems to refer to the porter Lampsas, who later was the founder of the Hotel Grande Bretagne in Athens, and the relationship seems to have consisted in this, that Zaharoff owed him the rent of a room. There is no need for surprise, however, that numerous people are to be found who pretend to remember that they are related to "the richest man in the world," are his intimate friends, his schoolmates, his hotel creditors, and helped him along the first miles of his career.

This story is also enlarged a little by Menevée whom I now quote:

It is alleged that at the time several big European firms wanted to induce the Turkish Government to place relatively large orders for artillery, and that these firms left no way untried to attain their end. But to all appearances the Turk was in no hurry to make up his mind. At this crisis Zaharoff entered into relations with the English firm of Maxim Limited, and pledged himself to get the orders, thanks to his relations with the competent minister whose acquaintance he had made in certain circles and in gambling dens and had gone on cultivating.

The mention of Maxim is a mistake of Menevée. The firm was the Nordenfeldt one. The amalgamation of it with Maxim's as we shall learn, happened eleven years later.

"In certain circles and gambling-dens." That was the first time that Basil Zaharoff had been able to make his past serve his future. This is the natural cæsura in his life. From now on he rises steadily. We have reached October 14, 1877.

II

DEAD MEN OVERTURE

AND now let us take a glance at fortune's favourite as he turns this corner in his life. The day is fine ; he wears no overcoat ; his suit a little too new, a little too much in the fashion, quite too Western, and yet thoroughly Balkan, makes a distinct impression in the streets of this Greek small town. The trousers are a little too yellow, the legs too beefy and muscular, a just too brightly coloured tie emerges from the fashionably cut waistcoat, and a stiff round hat sits at a little too rakish an angle on the blond hair which strikes so un-Balkan a note. And the silk handkerchief! If we could get a little nearer to him—but remember we are sixty years away—we should be able to smell the scent, just a little too potent: musk, possibly, from Paris, but in any case cheap.

A dandy, then? No, this man with the bright, hard, wary eyes concealed under half-closed lids is anything but a dandy ; one has only to notice that walk of his, the walk of a beast of prey, long-paced, springy, balanced for a leap to either side. A beast of prey dressed up like a man about town ; an adventurer who has just fallen on his first success. And when he goes into the money-changer's booth and lays down the five-pound note which he has just got from London—that is his weekly salary—when he smooths it out, watch his hands and the long, slightly bent fingers, stained a little with nicotine, with long, carefully tended, just too carefully tended nails. The money-changer has no chance ; these are not the fingers of the sort of man to whom one can risk handing out false notes. What have these fingers done? Hard manual work, the work of a porter, the work of a member of the Turkish Fire Brigade, military fatigues in Russia? That is not what they betray, but rather a cunning in flicking notes about, a croupier

skill—"in certain circles and gambling-dens," a nimbleness, the nimbleness of a cynical "guide for foreigners." Goods are goods and business is business, and the goods may be the blood of men and the business not always outside the province of an antiquated criminal code. How old is he? If he has done that rare thing, told the truth, he is eight and twenty. Born? Not now in Mughla, in that pathetic little hill town in Anatolia. Not yet in the Phanar; there are still too many witnesses living to risk that. For the next fifteen years we shall have to be content with a birthplace in the quarter of sharp practices, of the climbers, men with the lash of childhood poverty at their backs, the ambitious world-conquerors of Tatavla. Married? No; he has never been married, anywhere, at any time. Free and unencumbered, master of his destiny, the blond-haired, hard-eyed youth walks along the forward path with the springy pace of a beast of prey.

It is no accident that the first step on that path brought him once again into connection with the land from which he sprang—Turkey. The first step on the spiral ladder of success has been climbed. The next to still higher flights awaits him, and it will not surprise one that Zacharias Basil Zaharoff, or Zohar, or Sahar, lives in the new sphere just as in the old; it is the old life of adventure, but this time it is not led without plan, but with a definite end in view, and based on very definite material, to wit, cannon, machine-guns, shells, and with one object—power. Nor will it surprise one further that this Zacharias Basil Zaharoff will more than once retrace his steps and live his experiences over again, to rise steadily upwards flight by flight. It will be granted that Mr. Lampsas, or Mr. Skuludis, or whoever it may have been, made no mistake when he recommended the blond-haired youth to the Swedish captain.

But this is just prophecy, looking into the future, and we are losing the thread of the tale. Let us get back to it. When Basil Zaharoff took up his new post, the political situation was

very much the same as it had been in 1821, and it was the same as we shall find it in 1914. There is difference only in details, dates, names of battlefields, and generals. But once again Russia is setting the Balkan peoples free, and by that she does not mean so much the freedom of the Balkan peoples as the realization of her own aspirations on the Straits, for only if Russia controls them will the Black Sea become a Russian sea. The Czar this time is Alexander, the battlefield Plevna, a Turkish fortress in the Bulgar land against whose walls the Russian invasion threatens to be broken, and the Balkan people which is battling now is not the Greek but the Serbian. Greece itself is remaining neutral, that is, it is waiting until others pull the chestnuts out of the fire. Meantime it is arming, but two months after Zaharoff takes up his new duties news comes of the fall of Plevna and Greece is ready to be on the spot if the Sick Man of the East is to be dismembered. But this simple twice-two arithmetic does not match the higher mathematics as these are conceived in the capitals of the Great States. This time it is Britain who comes to cool down the flame of Greek ambitions, and so once again the battle with the Turk goes unfought and the Greek victory goes ungained. On the chessboard of politics only the important pieces are left: Russia wants Constantinople. England's heart beats with new sympathy for the Turk, and by heartfelt sympathy she means not sympathy for the Turk but displeasure at the prospect of seeing Russia mistress of the Bosporus. In London they rattle the sabre—that is, six million pounds are voted "for measures of precaution which have become necessary as a result of the events of the war in the East." The War Minister in Vienna demands armament credits of sixty million guilders. The Russians are forthwith baffled and peace on earth is once more secured. It is called this time the Peace of Berlin, and is signed in July 1878.

If I was writing a general history I should have to write about these happenings. But I am writing a history of arma-

ments, and that either anticipates general history or comes after it ; nor does it follow that history's broad lines, but makes deviations to right or left of them. Nor am I writing a general history of armaments, but a Zaharoff armaments history ; that is to say, for the next decade or two the history of armaments in Eastern Europe, in the Balkans. And it will soon be clear to the reader why not every bright young man from London could be appointed to this post of "agent of the Nordenfeldt firm for the whole of the Balkans." Equally it will be clear why this post was such an important one.

Not indeed because of the size of the business done. When Britain laid out six million pounds, or Austria sixty million guilders, that was big business. But it might be less profitable business. It was not just the fact that a Great Power could lower prices, but that it knew precisely what it wanted. In Eastern Europe things were different. The price was not so important, perhaps, as the question whether the goods would be paid for at once, or whether the purchaser would get deferred payment terms, perhaps, if possible, until after he had won his victory. If a State won, then the vanquished paid. If it was beaten, then one debt more or less made no difference. So it did not matter so much whether the latest, the most pleasing, the most effective weapons were delivered. All that was needed was that they should be newer and more effective than those of the neighbour. This elasticity of demand turned what was really "little business" into big business for the armaments firms.

How did Basil Zaharoff conduct himself and guard himself in circumstances like these ? The details of his activity in Athens are in the main wrapped in obscurity, unless, indeed, we must put to his credit to some extent at least the incredibly rapid expansion of Greek military power after the signature of the Berlin Treaty of 1878. Two years after the Congress of Berlin the total budget of the Greek State amounted to twenty million francs, and of that sixteen million was allotted to the

army. That was, so to say, on a peace footing. In 1885, when a new war was threatened by Bulgaria, there was another mobilization, and a loan of a hundred million francs was contracted for the increase of the army and the navy.

It is during this crisis that we find the first evidence of Zaharoff at work. He was no longer working at five pounds a week; he had a commission as well. The head of his firm, Torsten Vilhelm Nordenfeldt, who had come to England at the age of twenty, and when he was forty had begun to make his first discoveries in the realm of war-weapons, had taken out a whole series of patents in rapid succession, among them one for a light, quickfiring gun which played a prominent part in his own career, and in that of Basil Zaharoff. It was a good gun, but just not quite good enough. The really sensational product of the firm, and its speciality, was something very different—the Nordenfeldt submarine. The idea of a submarine is old, very nearly as old as the art of navigation itself, and, since its birth was heralded, there had been many attempts at its practical construction. In the American Civil War of 1861–1865 a sort of submarine had been at sea, and had promptly sunk. But the first war-submarine which really could go and manœuvre under water was built by Torsten Vilhelm Nordenfeldt. He displayed it to a group of naval experts in the Sound between Denmark and Sweden; he was congratulated, and his boat earned him the honour of being made a Royal Chamberlain of Sweden. But no one would buy it. The new weapon came on the scene most unseasonably as far as the great naval Powers were concerned, for it was a menace to their expensive, heavy, and so far unchallenged battleships. So far as they were concerned, Mr. Nordenfeldt and his ship could go to the devil, and Mr. Nordenfeldt was left high and dry with his honour and his expensive invention.

It was at this crisis that the young Zaharoff intervened. The whole affair was well planned. If they had no success with the unsellable submarine with the Great Powers by the

direct method, then the indirect method would have to be tried. So Basil Zaharoff discovered that he was a patriot. He was a Greek ; it was his patriotic duty to see to it that his native land had the preponderance in the Ægean. He offered the submarine to the Greek fleet, and so patriotic was he that he let it have the boat on very easy terms. In Athens they were deeply affected and they bought. Whether there was ever any thought of conferring a Royal Greek chamberlainship on the young patriot, history does not tell us.

But what it does tell us is that the young patriot went off to Constantinople with the ink hardly dry on the contract in his pocket. After all, on consideration, he had been born in Turkey, and it was only right and just that he should sell Turkey two submarines, too—that was only fair to Turkey. These two submarines in the Turkish fleet were soon discovered by Russia to be a threat and a provocation, and so there was no need of Basil Zaharoff's personal intervention to induce the Russian military attaché in London to get into touch with Torsten Vilhelm Nordenfeldt. The indirect method had succeeded. From now on the new weapon never ceased to appear in the naval budgets, and from Basil Zaharoff's first submarine to the submarines of the American Electric Boat Company, from which Mr. Zaharoff—according to the evidence collected by the United States Senate—even now, apparently in pious remembrance of his first transaction, still takes a commission on sales, there runs a long, straight line. And a very long line. I took a good deal of trouble to trace the history of this first submarine. My witness G., a Greek diplomatist who ought really to know it, declares that the submarine actually did once come into action against a much stronger Turkish cruiser and come off without damage. That was at the entrance to the Dardanelles. The cruiser came on. The submarine submerged, intending not to come up until the last moment. Unfortunately the pumps were not working properly. It took twenty minutes to get them going and the

submarine got to the surface—just in time to see the Turkish cruiser disappear over the horizon. I asked my witness Rear-Admiral X., who was then an officer in the Greek fleet, about this incident. Unfortunately he had forgotten it.

In this first transaction of the young Zaharoff one can find all the characteristics of later ones—the noble exposition of the concept of patriotism, and also the principle of double dealing, the systematic arming of two opponents, a principle whose discovery may have made the young man think of himself as a genius, as one who had had a happy stroke of inspiration. Later we shall see that the happy stroke became a carefully elaborated system, a system that was Zaharoff's own, and a little later still see the happy stroke, become super-dimensional in its development, cost more blood than fifty former wars had cost taken together.

But we have not reached that stage yet; we are still in the days of the happy stroke, and to these days belongs the duel between Zaharoff and Sir Hiram Stevens Maxim. It lasted for two years, from 1886 to 1888; it was fought out in Spezia, London, and Vienna; it ended with the reconciliation of the parties. And it is therefore particularly important for us because here we are in the exceptional position of having a source which Sir Basil has obviously omitted to colour or distort. He certainly never imagined that it would ever be used.

Sir Hiram Stevens Maxim wrote his reminiscences. You will find no mention there of the name Zaharoff. But you will find mention made of "an agent of the Nordenfeldt firm," and of a "Mr. Zedzed," who is identical with that agent. These memoirs of Maxim are remarkable for a perfect self-assurance, the self-assurance of a clear conscience. One day he noted:

On the next occasion of my going to Vienna I purchased a comic paper in the street. The illustration on the front page was a representation of myself firing a gun that was made in the shape of a coffin marking out F. Y. on the target with Death standing at my back and holding a crown over my head.

The cartoon did not cause him to shudder. He found it "comic." And the indifference of this "merchant of sudden death" is not malevolence but just lack of imagination.

Let us go back to the duel. We shall see it best if we look at it through Sir Hiram's eyes. Whence came he ? He is rather fond of anecdotage, and so it is not always easy to get at the facts from what he wrote. His family was French—Huguenot —and appears to have migrated to the United States in the eighteenth century. There on the Canadian border, in a town called Sangerville, Hiram was born. No dates are given in his autobiography, and these have to be deduced as a rule from the historical facts cited. He had technical gifts of a high order, wanted to be a sailor, made himself astronomical instruments. But his father apprenticed him to a coach-builder. Mice troubled him at his work. His first invention was a mouse trap, and if I were a technical authority I could no doubt prove that the mouse trap was the original draft of the Maxim gun. Then he lived a wanderer's life, on which his story is not always very credible. Definitely, he was an assistant barman, a weaver in a factory, a washer-up, and finally a boxer. You can see that the careers of future armament kings are somewhat disorderly, and that this Sir Hiram is a worthy counterpart of our Sir Basil. A manager said to him : "Your eyes are so big and stand out too much. Besides, did anyone ever know a boxer with such a big head ?"—a verdict which persuaded him to become an inventor. He constructed an automatic gas meter, a fire extinguisher, a steam pump for getting water to self-contained houses. Then in France there came the great electrical business. And then, when he had crossed over to England, he found it the fashion for any technical expert who really thought himself an expert to invent a gun of some sort. Hiram did consider himself a technical expert so he invented one—the Maxim machine-gun, the great hit of his life, the great hit of the armament industry as it was then. Six hundred shots a minute ! A humane, almost

a pacifist weapon when one remembered how quickly, how accurately, and how cleanly any war must now end almost as soon as it had begun. But the gun had now to be offered to interested Powers wherever the inventor could. Sir Hiram Maxim became his own commercial traveller, and so came into competition with another much younger and much less well-known traveller in the same line.

It began in Spezia, probably in 1886. Maxim had learned that the Italian Navy had held a competition, and that the Nordenfeldt gun had won it. So off he went with his own gun to Spezia. As the Nordenfeldt model had been severely tested and its capabilities were fully known, all he had to do was to break its record. That was easy. His gun was lighter, shot more quickly and better, and did not need so large a crew. He was asked to fling his gun into the sea and leave it under water for three days. He did that, too, and three days later the gun worked without any cleaning just as well as it did before. Then he went back to London and left the model in Spezia. Some weeks later the Duke of Genoa said he would like to see it firing. As he had other business to do he could not go himself to Spezia. Maxim commandeered two men to go with his agent to Spezia. One was a brilliant shot with a fabulous reputation in the British fleet, the other was one of the best mechanics obtainable. He relied on these men to perform what they had to do without a hitch.

Before they left London Maxim spoke to the agent about these English workers. When they left off work, he told him, they considered that equivalent to going on holiday, and to them that meant plenty of alcohol. They could only be relied on if they had no money in their pockets. So he ordered the agent to take over all their earnings, pay their expenses, but not let them touch a farthing in money until the tests were finished. He was to see that they lived in his own hotel and he was never to let them out of his sight for a moment.

All went well until they got to Spezia. Then the workers

produced a variety of reasons why they must have some money, but the agent remembered his orders and stuck to his guns.

But none the less he found his men so drunk next morning that to make the tests was out of the question. Who was the kindly, generous unknown who, as the story goes, took the two thirsty souls for a tour round Spezia at night ? For reasons unknown Maxim passes quickly over this problem ; it may, of course, have been an accident. But from Maxim's own lips, and from those of an Austrian witness, Major-General K., we shall soon learn that it is a usual feature of such accidents to find a certain agent of the Nordenfeldt firm mixed up in them. But whatever happened, not even a great quantity of alcohol could get rid of the fact that the Maxim gun was superior. Both men got sober again, and they were kept for the next twenty-four hours under lock and key. The Duke had to wait a little. At last the tests were made and a big Italian order was duly booked by Hiram Maxim, and not by Mr. Zaharoff, who was so generous with alcohol.

But Basil Zaharoff was not the man to give up the fight without more ado. He drew the lesson from his defeat. If Mr. Maxim, ex-boxer from Sangerville, U.S.A., came up again against a certain ex-fireman and ex-guide from the Near East, he would not get off so easily. Alcohol—that was too cheap a weapon. Others must be sought and were, as will be seen from Mr. Maxim's memoirs :

Shortly after we learned that they were having a trial of machine-guns at Vienna and that the Nordenfeldt gun so far had beaten the field. I wrote a very strong letter to the authorities and asked to be allowed to take a gun to Austria and fire it. A few days later I received permission to do so and at once took a gun to the armoury in Vienna. It was arranged that we should take it to the Steinfeld and fire it at long range.

Among the officials who came out from Vienna was H.R.H. the Archduke William, who was a field-marshal in the Austrian

service. He greeted me warmly and looked with great curiosity at the gun. I showed him the mechanism and explained it to him. I was then asked to fire at various ranges.

Later H.R.H. approached and congratulated me. I asked if I had fired fast enough to suit him. His answer was: "Ah, indeed, only too fast; it is the most dreadful instrument that I have ever seen or imagined. And now," he said, "I wish to tell you a little of my experience. Yesterday afternoon the agent of the other gun called at my office. He told me that the weather was very hot and advised me strongly not to go thirty miles into the country and expose myself on the hot Steinfeld for nothing. He said: 'The Maxim gun never works, and you will be greatly disappointed.' Now I come out here and see it fired without the least hitch, throwing every other completely into the shade. So you see how much we can believe what we hear."

You can see Mr. Zaharoff had learned a little. He did not trouble now about humble mechanics; he dealt with archdukes. That the Archduke would treat his warning so lightly as to go and risk sunstroke could not be foreseen. Mr. Nordenfeldt had no mean agent. If he had only had a better gun all would have been well. But, if Basil Zaharoff could not make his own gun better, what else was left but to make his competitor's weapon worse? His next action, therefore, was once again a delicate business, so delicate that it nearly came within the purview of the police. And as Sir Hiram Maxim, who at the time he was writing his memoirs was sitting beside his former competitor on the Board of Vickers, this time, too, has been very careful in his choice of words, we will get on better if we take another tack.

It is here that the witness K. comes in. I was looking in Vienna for evidence of Sir Hiram's story, and after much trouble I found reports in the Austrian newspapers, but I could find nothing in the Austrian archives. Finally, I did find something, the cover of the document I sought. It had

obviously been "requisitioned" in very high places, loaned out and never returned. Perhaps by a Government office, perhaps by the Minister of War himself, perhaps even by the Chancellery of the Emperor. I followed the matter up and came across, not, indeed, the missing document, but the witness K. K. is a very dignified old gentleman who was a major-general, and was so far directly connected with the introduction of the machine-gun into the Austrian Army that he was among the first officers to be instructed in its use. He talked warily, but honestly, and not unwillingly. He knew Basil Zaharoff's name only from the newspapers. He did not know that Sir Hiram Maxim had ever written memoirs. But he did remember a personal meeting with him.

I. When the tests were being made ?

HE. There were several tests. He had a full beard and at the firing was wearing a morning coat and top hat. Then there was a scandal. But the investigation either petered out or was abruptly stopped. As you couldn't find the document it was probably quashed.

I. An investigation ? Concerning whom ?

HE. That I can't tell you, for I don't remember the name. I only know it was Maxim's competitor. Earlier he had done something against Maxim in France or Italy, thrown his model into the sea or something like that. And he tried to do the same sort of thing in Vienna, or so it is said. An act of sabotage. The story is that he bribed the workers in the Maxim factory in England to send out a gun that wouldn't fire properly. Later there was a story that some young Austrian officers were mixed up in the affair. But that was only gossip. They were inexperienced and they let themselves be gulled by this competitor into bringing unsuitable cartridges for the gun or something like that, but I can't remember now. It was just a *gaffe* of the youngsters, that was all. That is why probably the whole business was hushed up.

I. But the tests went off splendidly.

HE. Does Maxim say so in the book? I expect he wanted to keep some things dark. Only the very last test went off all right. Before that—— Oh, but he must know better than that. Or am I mixing all this up with something else? Just at that time they were testing new howitzers. Perhaps it was there . . .

I. Could you tell me . . .?

HE. No. Perhaps I'm doing someone an injustice. I don't want to be unfair to anyone, sir, I am an old man.

What does Sir Hiram say of this occasion regarding which the old gentleman spoke so cautiously?

All the officers were well pleased with the gun, but they wanted one using their own cartridges, which I agreed to make. On my return to England I made the gun and brought it to Vienna. . . . When I had fired a few hundred rounds the gun worked very irregularly and finally stopped. On examining it I found that one of the sideplates that carry the mechanism had apparently been elongated by the force of the explosion, the right-hand sideplate being considerably longer than the left. I took the gun apart and found, very much to my surprise and disgust, that the greater part of the dovetail that secured the sideplate to the barrel had been milled off and a loose piece riveted on, the whole being blackened over to deceive me. I had to take my gun back to England with me as luggage.

This vexatious trick was the fault of my English foreman. He admitted that he had riveted this piece on. He said the weather was so warm and drowsy that the man at the milling-machine, after setting the machine going, had gone to sleep in his chair. When he woke up, the milling cutter had gone through the dovetail and he had riveted a piece on. This little ten-minute nap of my sleepy workman was the cause of one of the greatest misfortunes of my life.

There can be no doubt that this is the same story which our scrupulous witness K. knew. But how comes it that the act of sabotage which K. could remember has become transformed

in Maxim's story into a ten-minute nap, while the officers are exonerated, and that this time no part in the play is assigned to the agent of the Nordenfeldt firm ? Did the old major-general really mix up two incidents? Or did Sir Hiram feel that he ought to whitewash his colleague on the Board, and was himself in favour of suppressing the whole thing? It is an open question. But there is one thing ; if Basil Zaharoff here too took a hand in the game he went to work cleverly this time. He won the round. But still there was no getting rid of the fact that the Maxim gun was the better, and Mr. Maxim remained a dangerous competitor. And Zaharoff would not have been Zaharoff if he had not remained on the stage to see how things developed. He must have stayed in Vienna, for after Mr. Maxim had again made a gun in England. . . . But let us quote Maxim :

Again I went to Vienna. The gun was again tried at the Arsenal, and the agent of the other gun was on hand like a sore finger—not on the grounds, however, but looking through the gate with a lot of newspaper reporters. Many high officials came to see the gun, including the Emperor himself, and everyone was delighted. When the trials were over the agent of the other gun sought an interview with the leading officers. He spoke all languages and was a very plausible talker. One of the officers reported the conversation to me in English in about these words :

"Do you know who Maxim is ? I will tell you, he is a Yankee and probably the cleverest mechanician on the earth to-day. By trade he is a philosophical instrument-maker. He is the only person in the world who can make one of these guns and make it work. Everything has to be of the utmost accuracy—one-hundredth part of a millimetre here or there and it will not work—all the springs have to be of an exact tension. Suppose now that you want a quantity of these guns, where are you going to get them, as there is only one man in the world who can make them ? Maxim goes into the shop and actually makes these guns with his own hands, and of course the supply is limited. Then again, even if you could get them, do you expect

that you could get an army of Boston philosophical instrument-makers to work them?"

You see, Mr. Zaharoff was on the job. And the ex-boxer from the U.S.A. had good reason not to feel too comfortable in this contest with the ex-fireman from Constantinople. He might have been able to assure that officer who spoke English that his goods were the goods and that the agent of the Nordenfeldt firm was a dirty liar. But the ex-boxer was "groggy," and he took the count next morning when he opened the newspapers. It is Mr. Maxim's way to tell of his defeats more laconically than he tells of his victories. Thus he drily notes:

At the time that these last tests were taking place the newspapermen looking through the gate asked the agent what gun was being tested and he said: "The Nordenfeldt, it has beaten all the others." And this was printed in the Vienna papers, quoted in others, and circulated all over the world.

Actually the daily papers in Vienna for May 8, 1888, do speak of this wonderful "Nordenfeldt" machine-gun.

That is all. Then Sir Hiram goes on to tell of the comic paper and of Death who in such an amusing manner stood behind him and held a crown over his head.

Still more laconically does Sir Hiram tell the sequel. It seems that he went to see this dirty liar of an ex-fireman in the room in the latter's hotel—obviously to indicate to him his contempt of these immoral methods of securing business. Their conversation was held behind closed doors. Its result may be found in a subordinate clause barely half a line long in Sir Hiram's memoirs. There is a little more detail in the London *Register of Companies* for 1888. The Nordenfeldt Guns and Ammunition Co., Ltd., and the Maxim Gun Co. disappeared, and in their place there arose a new firm called the "Maxim Nordenfeldt Guns and Ammunition Company." Mr. Maxim had the better gun, but on the side of the Nordenfeldt firm the bigger battalions fought—the ex-guide from Tatavla. And in the whole

history of the world there is no record of anyone ever having got the better of a guide from Tatavla.

We must not, however, take leave of the wary, though anecdote-loving Sir Hiram without turning over a few more leaves of his book. When he comes to the point where the agent of the Nordenfeldt firm was beginning to pull at the same rope with him, the latter is almost named. He appears as "Mr. Zedzed," and is described as "my friend." But what Sir Hiram has to tell of this friend is for our purposes not very fruitful. More fruitful because they are so characteristic of this cheery arming of friend and foe alike are some others of Maxim's anecdotes. There is his story of how every high personage who visited London received from the armament makers a graceful gift of welcome in the shape of a specimen of the latest model, a generosity which as a rule was extremely profitable. And it could be restrained in cases where the prospect of profitable repayment was somewhat slight. Such was the case of the Shah of Persia who was little able and still more unwilling to do any repaying. The quick firing of the Maxim gun was a source of great pleasure to His Majesty, and he delicately hinted at the possibility of getting a specimen to try. But he was told coldly that the guns were the property of the firm and that an individual could not dispose of them ; that required a Board meeting. The Chinese Prince Li Hung Chang was another person much interested. But when he was told that the cost of charging the gun ran into three figures, the wise man from the East replied : "That gun shoots too quickly for China." That was the voice of reason, and it could be heard even in Europe. Thus the King of Denmark, when the same figure was mentioned to him, refused to buy with the words : "That sort of gun would bankrupt my little kingdom in two hours." But I have sought in vain in Sir Hiram's memoirs for a representative of a Great Power who used such language. And so the invention was a terrific success. Since then many million men owe their deaths to it.

Here the story begins of the conquest of Russia by a munitions agent. It starts in 1888 and ends in August 1914; that is, if not with the complete conquest of Russia, at least with a world war. But that is to anticipate. For the moment the biographer has just to state the fact that, in the year 1888, Basil Zaharoff went to Russia, and that this first Russian period of his is important for us because that was the time when he suddenly became communicative. He is now eleven years older than when we last saw him, but so far as we can judge he had not in these years lost that masculine attractiveness of which we hear so much, and it is to this, no doubt, that we may ascribe the extreme rapidity with which he rose in St. Petersburg.

The story begins with a Tatavla piece, with a transaction worthy of a "foreigners' guide." There lived in St. Petersburg the Grand Duke S., to whom it was very difficult to get access. He was the head of the Russian artillery, and whoever got his ear got orders. He had a life apart from the artillery, a private life—in other words, the famous dancer K. Some four weeks later, St. Petersburg society learned that the dancer K. had a new favourite, a Greco-English or an Anglo-Greek gentleman who spoke Russian perfectly, and was a fine-looking man. A week later the fine-looking man was presented to the indulgent, smiling Grand Duke. And a week later the first Russian order went to London.

There is no documentary evidence of this story. But here we must not be too insistent for the period with which we are now dealing. What is presented to us as documentation is a clever smoke screen, and Mr. Zaharoff's effort to create a smoke screen is the most comprehensive effort of the kind which ever was undertaken by a man to conceal his past. He works on the snowball system. When anyone began to touch on some dark places in his past, he made no attempt to meet the situation with denials, but served up "in strict confidence" to a deluded, eager circle of friends the stories

of an escape from prison and a murder of a policeman, which had now been worked up with all the art of Casanova himself. Somewhere in the preceding years he must have got hold of the Venetian's memoirs. That set the snowball a-rolling. Rumours multiplied in the most fantastic manner. Zaharoff smiled and confirmed them, confirmed them and smiled. What an interesting fellow this Mr. Zedzed was, what a lady-killer, what a Casanova! He had nothing to do but to help on the process with a cautious hand, and in a few months had spread around him that smoke screen which now confronts us, and which we are trying to penetrate. Once again he had brought off a *coup*. He has, perhaps, the worst reputation that ever man had. The words of our trusty D., the ex-Premier, echo in our ears : "Monsieur Zaharoff prefers to be mentioned as a *mauvais sujet* rather than not be mentioned at all." We see now how true that was—and how false.

Let us see how far the rumours had gone. What did they tell of, how did they go ? The escape and murder complex, *plus* its embellishments, we have already discussed. As far as the lady-killer story is concerned there seems to be evidence of a sort only for the story that it was the dancer K. who served as bridge to the Grand Duke. Other stories tell of affairs with officers' wives, of an affair with a young aristocrat who drowned herself for his sake, affairs in less mentionable places with which we shall not deal, nor would, even if there was proof of them. In St. Petersburg he celebrated his fortieth birthday, and that is one of the many dangerous ages in a man's life. Thus there remain only the tales which are connected with his business activity. They run in this fashion :

The scene of action is a state which must not be mentioned. Let us say it was in the Balkans. Up to this time it had turned deaf ears to the blandishments of the Maxim–Nordenfeldt firm. Mr. Zedzed was busy in St. Petersburg, but he had to look after business down there, and so went to the State in question for a day or two. It was a Monday evening ; he was

in a hurry ; he went at once to the Ministry, asked to be received by the Minister, and was conducted to the presence. Then came the following dialogue :

THE MINISTER. I have only seen you to tell you that you need not trouble yourself further. Your offers don't in the least interest me.

ZAHAROFF. You'll think it over again, won't you. I shall come again to-morrow, that is on Thursday.

THE MINISTER. There isn't the slightest use in your coming. Besides, to-morrow isn't Thursday ; it's Tuesday.

ZAHAROFF. To-morrow is Thursday.

THE MINISTER. I tell you, it's Tuesday.

ZAHAROFF. Let's have a bet on it, Your Excellency, I'll bet you a hundred thousand francs that to-morrow's Thursday.

We have only to record that the Minister won the bet. From that moment that State was one of the loyalest customers of the Maxim–Nordenfeldt Guns and Ammunition Company.

Here is another of these stories, although it is not quite certain whether it is an actual incident in Zaharoff's life, or whether it should, as one authority alleges, be credited to one of his competitors, possibly the agent of the Skoda works. In the race for orders he had got over several of the hurdles. The next, and that was a really serious obstacle, was a major who was entirely recalcitrant. Zaharoff put a thousand-rouble note in his cigarette-box, offered the major a cigarette while they were talking, and turned away as he helped himself. Then he himself took a cigarette, saw that the note had vanished, felt that he had won his case, and proceeded to business. But the major was not to be shaken. Zaharoff was rather disconcerted. Suddenly the major said casually : "By the way, could I have another cigarette ?"

After surmounting this obstacle, Zaharoff found himself confronted by the all-powerful General K.; his is a name known to history. And now he could make no progress at all. Fourteen days went by ; three weeks. Finally, Zaharoff managed to get

invited to tea by Madame K. Alone. He tried to speak of business, but it was no use. Then he determined to go all out for victory. He discussed the furniture, stopped at a glass chandelier, and cried out, "What a masterpiece!" Actually it was a horror, pretentious, and completely valueless. The lady tried to damp down his enthusiasm, but Zaharoff insisted: "No, no, I am an authority on chandeliers, I collect them." He climbed up on a chair; he examined it with the true connoisseur's air. Then he said: "May I take a liberty, gracious lady? What will you take to let me have this piece for my collection? I think it is worth a hundred thousand roubles." There was a long silence, and then the lady said: "I shall ask my husband if he will let the chandelier go." The very next day he was asked to tea again. Again alone. The lady said to him: "We're very fond of that chandelier, but my husband has consented to part with it for a hundred and fifty thousand roubles."

The chandelier was taken down and sent to London. It was an excellent bargain. Where it actually landed after it left the house of General K. is not reported.

Yet another story. This time the scene is laid in another State which must not be named. A new political party had just got into power, and a new appointment had just been made to one of the high posts in the Admiralty.

Next day the agent of the Maxim–Nordenfeldt firm called on the new occupant, a man generally feared because of a certain military brusqueness. "Your Excellency," said the agent, "we had the great pleasure of sending a lovely little steam yacht to Your Excellency's predecessor. I expect that you, too, Your Excellency, would be interested in just such a lovely little yacht."

THE ADMIRAL. Stop. Bribery of that sort was perhaps possible under the late Government. But it has got to stop now. Be damned thankful I don't have you arrested. Get out of this. Presents are not taken here.

ZAHAROFF (coldly). I don't like your tone, Your Excellency. There is no question of a present. You will have to pay for the yacht. Its price is ten pounds sterling.

THE ADMIRAL (much more mildly). Ah, pay for it. Now that's quite another matter, Mr. Zaharoff. Send it along, please. And send two. My son also has a weakness for yachting.

What is the position with regard to the possibility of documenting stories of this sort? It is characteristic that practically the same tale is related of General Goering and the agent of a motor-car company. And to-morrow, perhaps, they will become part of yet a third legendary person's history. The fact that these stories are not definitely connected with him shows how extremely successful Zaharoff was in the creaton of his cloud screen. Of this period of his life we know practically nothing certain. Nor was this impenetrable sojourn in Russia a long one. It lasted only until 1890, and in 1890 we find another cæsura.

A cæsura, after which the mystery is still there, but the method of mystification has changed. The tactic is different. A sudden transformation took place in the life of this forty-year-old English, Russian, and Turk. This juggler with his own past, who was at home at the Czar's Court, and in all the hotels of Eastern Europe, transforms himself at a stroke. Enough has been heard and told of this past. Draw a line under it. A new life is beginning.

The best way to begin a new life is to get a new place to live in. Or get a place of one's own to live in, if so far one never has had a place. And so it came to pass that for the first time the name of a foreigner's guide from Tatavla was received into the fashionable reference books. The *Tout Paris* of 1890 calls this foreign gentleman "Zaharoff." What is he?: "the possessor of several foreign orders." An unusually precise description of Monsieur Zaharoff's activities in the world.

And we find here, too, his first address—54 Rue de la Bienfaisance, Paris.

Besides—foreigners' guide from Tatavla? Now that smacked too strongly of a rather strong-smelling past which did not suit a gentleman who had crashed into *Tout Paris*. So once again draw a line under it. It was not possible to make it credible that he was born in London or in Paris, but who could prove the contrary if he disclosed the fact that his birthplace was somewhere down there, in the East, in the gaunt Anatolian hills, in a little town from whose honourable poverty and tidy penury a successful self-made man by his own fierce effort had risen, *via* foreign orders, to 54 Rue de la Bienfaisance, Paris. And not only could no one prove the contrary, but he could prove the fact. There is a story of an old wine merchant who gathered his sons round his death-bed and revealed to them the last wisdom, the deepest secret of his life: "You can make wine out of grapes, too." This time Basil Zaharoff made wine out of grapes, and procured from the really existing town of Mughla a real birth certificate. By that time he had been away from Mughla at least thirty years.

The possession of an apartment of his own and a birth-certificate of his own was a great gain in a new life. But it was far from being everything. First of all, an end had to be put definitely to this vagabond existence, the life of an agent highly paid indeed, but none the less one who might without more ado be flung into the street. What was the position now of the Maxim Nordenfeldt Guns and Ammunition Company? Maxim was the head of the firm, the embodiment of it; his friend, "Mr. Zedzed," was its commercial traveller. Was there any need really in this combination of a Swedish engineer? Mr. Torsten Vilhelm Nordenfeldt saw himself slowly but implacably driven to the wall. To-morrow he would be got rid of as a nuisance. And the day after he will sell out his shares in the arm—and to Mr. Basil Zaharoff. It was not very long

ago since this very Basil Zaharoff had burst into tears because this man whom he now squeezed out of his own factory had agreed to pay him five pounds a week. The name of the firm was not altered, but, if it had been altered, then it would have been called Zaharoff–Maxim, and not *vice versa*. You can see how everywhere in the life of our adventurer there are alterations, rearrangements, consolidations.

Why, however, this sudden change in life? What really happened? Did it all happen simply because he was now forty and the first grey hairs were visible on his temples. Not at all; the Zaharoffs are not sentimentalists. Why, then? A very clever English merchant, the trusty P., said when I asked that question: "The age of forty isn't a turning-point in the life of a Levantine, but the amassing of the first hundred thousand pounds is. Up to that time much could be permitted, but once he had a hundred thousand in the bank then things were different. That made him a pillar of the State."

Be that as it may, this time the causes are to be sought elsewhere. We have to go back to the autumn of 1889. The Maxim Nordenfeldt Guns and Ammunition Company had received a big order from Spain, but after the letter containing the order had been received another followed hard on its heels cancelling it. But had not the firm an agent living in St. Petersburg who could regulate such trifling mishaps with absurd ease? Mr. Zaharoff by way of variety had to go south again.

In a railway carriage he met a young married woman whose maiden name rang like a peal of bells—Maria del Pilar Antonia Angela Patrocinio Simona de Muguiro y Beruete, and who had just a very short time ago got married to a Duke of Marchena; "par la suite," as the French source says a little mysteriously, she had become the Duchess of Villafranca de los Caballeros. Her husband was of Bourbon stock and a cousin of Alfonso XII. This lady who was so rich in names chanced to meet our Basil Zaharoff on a railway journey.

One account tells that she was on her honeymoon when she met this gentleman who was at the moment so extremely interested in the affairs of Spain, and another adds that she literally fell into his arms while flying from her sleeping-car and from the brutality of her just-wedded husband. But although it is possible that the meeting of the munitions agent journeying to Spain and the Spanish duchess and kinswoman of the Spanish king was not quite so accidental on his part, but was engineered with the intention of repeating with slight variation, but still more effectively, the *coup* of St. Petersburg, the masterstroke of the dancer and the Grand Duke, it is also certain that he soon forgot this aspect of it. Think of the situation. Think of that dizzy, rapid rise, and think what it meant to our foreigners' guide, fireman, possibly Russian private, and certainly embezzler of boxes of gum and sacks of gallnuts, to this man with the whip of childhood poverty at his back, to meet this princess with the three and thirty names ! Now for the first time he had really made good in his own eyes, not by those early deeds of Odyssean cunning, not by the hundred thousand pounds to which sum his bank balance may have swollen. The fact that the Maxim Nordenfeldt firm managed to get the cancelled order restored, and that to that first order many other orders were to follow, certainly played no greater part in the rise and growth of passion between this man and this woman than all the many other mutual helpfulnesses arising so naturally out of community of fate. The lady was in great distress. The brutality of her husband indicated a tendency in him to madness, which shortly after asserted itself so violently that he disappeared into a lunatic asylum. For a devout Catholic there could of course be no question of a divorce, still in the opinion of the doctors it would not be long before the wretched husband departed this life.

Meantime the lady's gentle influence gradually changed the life of her companion. Very quietly he got ready a docu-

ment, which proved to be the precursor of all the documents provided for his marriage; he strengthened his business position in London, and saw to it that he got into the best Parisian society. As we have seen him do before, he drew a line under his past. Only a woman's influence could change a man thus. It is quite certain that from that day on he did not wear gaudy ties.

He wore gaudy ties so seldom now, he became all at once so taciturn, he so resolutely made silence the rule of his life that for the years that follow we do now really enter a dark period. Very little comes forth into the light of day. During the next ten years he seems to have intentionally dropped out of business in Russia. There were now a good few places on the earth which shared in his past, and under that past a line was drawn. In any case there were other places where there was money for a merchant of sudden death. There was Spain; but that we have already related. According to the entry in the *Internationale Biographische Archiv* of Berlin the orders Zaharoff got there amounted to thirty million pounds sterling two months after his meeting with the Duchess of Villafranca. And now there were the Spanish–Portuguese republics in South America to visit. Here it was the Balkans all over again. Bolivia, Paraguay, Argentina, Chile. To find out when, where, and how Basil Zaharoff intervened in that chaos of predatory wars, insurrections, and revolutions we shall have to appeal once again to the testimony of witnesses. Here is some: Ro. says:

He went to South America because at that time there was a war on. One between Argentina and Chile. These wars always at first sight look as if they had some national background. Actually they are wars between Britain and the United States, wars for oil, for quebracho, for nitrates. Whenever the firms in New York or London came to some agreement, then suddenly there was peace and the national flags were rolled up and put away. The war at that time was one of the nitrate wars.

Against all the rules of the game Zaharoff butted in. He went across and induced Argentina and Chile to make peace. That was his debut as peacemaker. Up to that time neither State had bought munitions from him. Now they both did. The peace lasted five months, that is, just long enough for Zaharoff to deliver his goods. Then Argentina and Chile had to start fighting again. It was in any case just a little war ; only sixteen thousand dead.

Testimony of de S., who was in the consular service of the Republic of Paraguay :

Your witness is completely ignorant. At that time there wasn't any war between Argentina and Chile. Sir Basil Zaharoff's *coup* of the five months' peace was later, in 1902, and the peace was that between Panama and Colombia at the time when Panama revolted from Colombia and declared herself independent. But at the date in question, 1894, when, according to your witness, there ought to have been a war between Argentina and Chile, what actually was on was the Chaco war between Bolivia and Paraguay. Your witness has probably confused things. It is true that for a couple of months the Bolivians stopped hostilities to give Zaharoff time to equip them and then started the war again. But he never delivered any goods to us. The truth is simply that there was peace for a couple of months because the Bolivians did not attack and naturally we didn't attack either. As far as we were concerned we always held by peace in the Chaco. We didn't even let Basil Zaharoff enter the country. In any case later on he was arrested in Bolivia because an agent of a rival English firm denounced him. They found documents on him from which it was ascertained that he had bribed every superior officer in Bolivia to make certain that they would buy not from this Englishman but from him. And that notwithstanding the fact that he charged prices 50 per cent. higher than other English firms. He was put in gaol in La Paz, but he got out later and that by means of a rope which he made out of his bedding [here follows the story of the escape from the Casanova memoirs].

Ro. once again.

What de S. says to you is characteristically South American. Sheer confusion. For instance, the revolt of Panama was a mere comic-opera revolution. The United States wanted to construct the Panama Canal. Columbia wouldn't give the concession and so the United States staged the revolt of the Province of Panama in order to come to an arrangement with the new State on the concession. So there was no cessation and no resumption of hostilities at Zaharoff's behest, because there weren't any hostilities at all. Enough of Panama. On the other hand, I admit that I may have confused the war between Argentina and Chile and the eternal Chaco war between Bolivia and Paraguay. In any case, at that time Zaharoff had his fingers in every South American pie. There is even a story of his having been President—under another name—of a South American republic. In any case don't believe de S. when he tells you that Paraguay was an innocent lamb, which was always on the defensive and had no dealings with Zaharoff. The contrary is the truth—ask a Bolivian ! And what de S. tells you of the Zaharoff incident in Bolivia is completely distorted. What actually happened was that Zaharoff really was denounced for bribing high military officials and selling at excessive prices, but it was not by the agent of a rival English firm, but by a London journalist called Thomas or something like that. Zaharoff was arrested and secret military documents were found on him. But he didn't land in prison again, as de S. alleges. There was a successful and energetic intervention, and the indignation was general against this journalist who had been intriguing against Zaharoff in several States. He actually went after Zaharoff to Japan to stir up feeling against him there. The great Mitsui affair there was the result. It was the same journalist who brought down Admiral Fuji. The real motives for this Thomas's campaign of hate against Zaharoff, I don't know. Perhaps there was a woman in the case. But the most important thing is this, that the whole business didn't, as Mr. de S. alleges, happen in La Paz. It was on the occasion of the great officers' revolt in Chile. That is to say, Chile, not Bolivia, was the scene.

I intentionally omitted to convey this part of Ro.'s testimony to Mr. de S. I was rather afraid of his retort. But it is possible to test to some degree the statements made in these contradictory reports.

First : The Revolt of Panama from Colombia was arranged by a younger follower of Ferdinand de Lesseps, a one-legged war veteran called Bunau-Varilla, who sold a scheme for a Panama Canal to the United States, and was commissioned by that country to make a revolution. He himself, who was promptly appointed "ambassador" of Panama so that he could go to Washington to obtain the recognition of the new republic and dispose of the concession, has stated : "I am one of the few men to found a State without shedding a drop of blood." As far as the Colombia conflict is concerned, therefore, the details given by de S. are incorrect. (Still, it is surprising that the American Davenport tells us that in 1906 Zaharoff as a French agent intervened with President Roosevelt in connection with the Panama business.)

Second : The story of how Zaharoff secured a peace for five months so that he could arm the belligerents is given in several other sources which are clearly independent of each other, but are none the less purely journalistic. One of them definitely places the scene of action in Argentina and Chile ; others only speak of "two South American States." Therefrom it seems that we can state that Basil Zaharoff actually did bring off this little *coup* with its "only sixteen thousand dead," but that we cannot state definitely where it occurred. That must remain as obscure as

Third : The place of the bribery incident which de S. puts in Bolivia and Ro. in Chile. But although documents are lacking here too, we should like to examine a little more closely this incident which is very different from the earlier *coups* of a gambler with a sense of humour. An individual who in one account is called the agent of a rival firm and in the other is an English journalist, and according to Ro. is called "Thomas

or something like that," denounced Zaharoff to a Government —what Government we do not know with certainty—for bribing high military officials and selling goods at excessive prices. Zaharoff was arrested, but somebody intervened and he was set free. We need not stop to discuss the story of yet another escape from prison with the aid of the famous rope.

Fourth : But who is this "Mr. Thomas" ? Ro. says that he followed Zaharoff to Japan—and thereby we learn of a stay (not mentioned elsewhere) by Basil Zaharoff in the Far East—and that the result later was "the great Mitsui affair. He was the same journalist as caused the fall of Admiral Fuji." These details are too precise to let us simply wave them aside without any further investigation. Perhaps we can get at the truth from this "Mitsui affair" which has been mentioned. Let us have a look at it anyway ; we shall follow one of the best Japanese sources, to wit, the *Japan Weekly Chronicle* of June and July 1914.

Japan was arming, the construction of a new cruiser had been put up to tender, and among the tenders were two between which the choice was very narrow. One was sent in by the English firm of Armstrong, the other by the English firm of Vickers. The latter firm at that time (1910) was under the direction of Basil Zaharoff ; we shall see later how he got there. The firm was in bitter secret competition with Armstrong despite the fact that at that time the rivals had to stand shoulder to shoulder, bank balance to bank balance, in a whole series of transactions. Later this "shoulder to shoulder" business ended in a general *débâcle* and to an amalgamation between the old rivals. But there was still much water to flow under the bridge before that happened ; the whole big business of a World War lay between.

But at that time (1910) they were still competitors in Tokio, and the Japanese Rear-Admiral Fuji was sent to England with the commission to examine on the spot the bill of costs and the specifications of the two firms. He arrived in England in

March 1910 and in August he sent in his report to the Naval Stores Department in Tokio : the tender of Vickers is not only more definite but it is cheaper. In November the Japanese Government accepted Vickers' tender. Later it came out that there was a certain director of Vickers who was on very friendly terms with Rear-Admiral Fuji. He asked him to use his good offices in Vickers' cause, and to get them the order. After the admiral returned to Japan, this director gave him many proofs of his kindly feelings, and over a period of years sent several quite considerable sums of money to him. The case was investigated and it turned out that the admiral had taken commissions from other English armament firms. But we are dealing with an affair of 1910. If it has anything at all to do with the affair we are now dealing with—which happened in the 'nineties—then we must go into the close relations mentioned above between Admiral Fuji and this director of Vickers. What, for example does the laconic "it turned out" of the original report mean ? How did this bribery by Vickers of a Japanese admiral come out ? Was it a denunciation ? Are there traces to be found in the Fuji case of that mysterious journalist who had denounced Zaharoff somewhere in South America ? Let us look through the reports of the Tokio case and see if we can find a journalist.

And we find this :

Reuter's correspondent in Tokio bought from a former employee of the Siemens-Schukert firm a secret agreement, which indicated that the Siemens firm in London had promised money to Admiral Fuji. In the course of the investigation it was extracted that there was a regular system of corruption on the part of armament firms, and that the sums mentioned had been received by Rear-Admiral Fuji.

That is to say, here we have once again a journalist who is extraordinarily interested in armaments. It seems as if a standard type had been constructed for Zaharoff scandals.

But now, who is this journalist who gave things away ?

Perhaps we shall get nearer to an answer if we put the old *cui bono* question. To whose profit was it that things should be given away ? In the case of Rear-Admiral Fuji and the cruiser ordered from Vickers the trail will surely lead us straight to the rival firm, the firm of Armstrong. Naturally there could be no information to be got out of Armstrongs, even if it had not meanwhile amalgamated with its old rival. But there were other possibilities of finding this mysterious "Mr. Thomas or something like that" in the history of the Armstrong firm. In 1904 the firm of Armstrong were sued in the courts for a commission, a quite insignificant case in which the public took no interest. I shall not give my own account of it, I shall quote Mr. G. A. Perris, who treated this obscure case in his pacifist book *The War Traders* as fully as was possible for him to do in his ignorance of the details quoted in these pages which are linked up with it.

On December 14 and 15, 1904, one Robert Lawrie Thompson, formerly a special correspondent of *The Times*, took action in the Chancery division before Mr. Justice Warrington against Sir W. G. Armstrong, Whitworth & Co., Ltd., claiming an account and payment of commission and other sums alleged to be due from the firm or its predecessors, Armstrong, Mitchell & Co., with regard to orders for warships and other war material from the Governments of Chile, China, and Japan during the years 1892–1898. The case is only briefly reported, but the following details are given in *The Times* :

After Mr. Dankwerts, K.C., had outlined the plaintiff's case, Mr. Rufus Isaacs, K.C., for the defendants said that he was glad to be able to inform the court that the parties had arranged terms of compromise which it was not necessary to state publicly. Proceedings were accordingly stayed. . . . "It appeared," said the report, "that the plaintiff, from his previous avocation, knew a great many things which were going on in various parts of the world and was personally acquainted with many foreign personages and officials in high position. His engagement with the defendant firm was not that of an ordinary

commission agent; his business was to find out what was happening in various foreign countries, to let his employers know what was likely to be required, and generally to prepare the ground for orders for warships and war material. His position, in fact, was somewhat analogous," said counsel, "to that of a private diplomatic agent or ambassador." This is credible enough. All foreign correspondents of leading journals have peculiar sources of information; many of them have considerable influence in the countries where they reside. It is the pride of *The Times* to maintain something as nearly as possible approaching the status of a diplomatic service. De Blowitz in Paris and Dr. Morrison in Pekin are only two of the notable names in this hierarchy, and do we not know that Mr. Bourchier, the special correspondent of Printing House Square in the Balkans, was one of the authors of the Balkan Alliance?

From 1886 to 1897, then, Mr. Robert Lawrie Thompson was "private diplomatic agent or ambassador" for the Armstrong Company, and up to September 1894 he was also a special correspondent of *The Times*, ceasing to act in the latter capacity " owing to a difference of opinion on the political situation in the East." His first field of operations was Spain and Portugal; "but this did not turn out a very profitable business." Afterwards Mr. Thompson began to represent the firm in Argentina and Chile "in which latter country," said counsel, "he had special advantages for obtaining orders." What the special advantages were we are not told, but apparently the result was satisfactory, for, in August 1892, this remarkable commission agreement was arrived at with regard to operations by "the private ambassador both in South America and in Further Asia." Mr. Thompson went to China in 1893 and remained in the East till May 1897; and it was in regard to sums outstanding under these agreements that he took action against the Armstrong Company. How much Mr. Thompson claimed, or how much Armstrongs paid, we do not know. It will be seen that there was to be at least £5,000 for expenses alone; as the arrangement lasted so long this indicates that the other payments were substantial.

There you have it, quite an unimportant commission lawsuit.

For Mr. Perris it is one of the countless pillars of his pacifist case. But it means more to us. I assert that here we have the key to the statements of de S. and Ro. on the mysterious activities of Basil Zaharoff during the last ten years of last century. I got it more by luck than anything else, and came across it during a long detour over twenty years and *via* the unfortunate Admiral Fuji, but we have it.

This Mr. Robert Lawrie Thompson, in public the special correspondent of *The Times* and in private the agent of the Armstrong firm, is, according to all the laws of probability, identical with the man whom we know from the statements of Ro., who was called "Thomas or something like that," a journalist by profession and on grounds not stated declared to be interested in the armament business. As a result of this unimportant lawsuit these grounds are now no longer a secret to us. This unimportant lawsuit is the plain tragedy of Sir Basil Zaharoff's successful rival. Follow his trail. Portugal, Spain—"but this did not turn out a very profitable business." We can well believe Mr. Thompson here; at that time Spain was giving its orders to another English firm which in some mysterious way enjoyed the patronage of the Duchess of Villafranca. So Mr. Thompson shook its dust from his feet and went off to South America. Argentina, Chile, we are always meeting these names in our investigations. Here Mr. Thompson once again came up against Zaharoff and here apparently he won the round. Does this fit in with what our friend Ro. says, that Zaharoff had a slight mishap in Chile—bribery, denunciation by a journalist, and arrest. We may believe it, for how does the sentence go of the cautious counsel: "Chile, in which latter country he had special advantages for obtaining orders." Was this the nigger in the woodpile that made the Armstrong firm prefer to compromise rather than fight the case against this agent of theirs who knew so much? At any rate, we are on the right track, for we hear almost immediately that Mr. Thompson went off thereafter to the Far East. To Japan!

But there he appears to have had little luck in business, otherwise the Armstrong firm would not have given him cause to complain that he had not got his commission. This Mr. Thompson was certainly an active agent. But fate condemned him for ten years to take almost the same course in his travels as a still more active one. From Spain to Argentina and Chile and then to Japan. He went down in defeat, and so he had to bring an action to get a couple of thousand pounds while his abler rival had used his fall to ascend to astronomical heights. Let us leave him in his defeat. He serves only to illumine by a court example the course of the victor, a course which so many mysteries surround.

(In the interest of my reputation as a detective I should not tell tales, but I must admit that a good many things were discovered more by good luck than by anything else. Later it came out that "a director of the Vickers firm" who bribed Admiral Fuji was not Sir Basil himself but one of his subordinates, the manager of the Barrow works. And the journalist who bought the compromising documents in Tokio was not our Mr. Thompson but an entirely different person. But a high official in Scotland Yard to whom I told this story, sympathizing with my feeling of inferiority, confided to me that that sort of thing has happened once or twice even to the Yard.)

Now, that is all that can be brought to light of the activities of Sir Basil from this time until the year 1904. We have been able to shed a light as feeble as that from a pocket lantern into a broad, deep, and dark gulf. The new method of mystification directed by a woman is seen to be incomparably more efficient than the old smoke-screen tactics of the joyous days in St. Petersburg.

It was left to the Investigation Commission of the U.S. Senate first to reveal publicly Zaharoff's activities on the American continent. As for South America, the material, though still incomplete, supplies weighty evidence in favour of what was said by Ro. and de S. Incidentally the American connections

established at that time, and directed for a long period by Michel Clemenceau, went on functioning up to Zaharoff's recent death when it was found out that the old man, whom everybody, including his biographer, thought to have abandoned at long last all business interests, still got his high commission from each submarine order placed by certain European powers, notably Spain, with U.S. yards. (As for the connection of Zaharoff with the Clemenceau dynasty, we shall have a lot to say about it later.)

But let us go back to the turn of the century. There is at least one fixed point in these years of deadly silence. Within the firm itself in England, Hiram Maxim had steadily become less and less an active partner and more and more a mere figurehead. What, indeed, had he to do? The machine-gun had been invented, and in that line there was no improvement to be made. The days of boxing, of the mouse trap, of small but clever inventions had finished; Maxim had arrived; he had got as high as he could. He spent a vast sum in building a "dragonfly" twelve yards high and double as long and thrice as broad. This ghastly plesiosaurus could hardly fly, if indeed it could fly at all, but it caused a tremendous sensation. But it was no submarine. Not even Greece bought; there was no chance of big business. If, none the less, the company's business grew and flourished, the credit therefor went to the man who had spent his youth in Tatavla, and who, in the succeeding twenty years, had brilliantly mastered his new trade. From that he deduced that for him Mr. Maxim was no longer a worthy partner. Once again, how would extending the scope of operations succeed?

Let us look at the *Register of Business Companies* for 1897. The firm belonging to the visible Mr. Maxim and the invisible Mr. Zaharoff was bought up. The purchaser was Vickers, Sons & Co., and the price was £1,353,334, which was to be paid to Messrs. Maxim and Zaharoff partly in cash, partly in shares of the new company. And here again we reach

a turning-point, if not for Zaharoff, at least for his career.

First let us finish with Mr. Maxim. This sensitive gentleman had apparently during the negotiations for the purchase sacrificed a considerable sum in order to be a member of the new firm, and now the new Vickers–Maxim Company gave him what was practically honourable burial by putting him on the Board of Directors. He "will still place his valuable services at the disposal of the company as technical adviser." Those who know the language of industry know what that means. Once, however, he returned to prominence. That was in the Boer War. The struggle had been in bitter progress for some months and still England had not brought the tiny South African nation to its knees. In the city there was nervousness. Mining shares were falling, for the South African mines were no longer working. A Boer delegation was in The Hague ; peace negotiators ought to be sent to meet them. To whom in the City of London it occurred to entrust this difficult bit of private business to Sir Hiram Maxim is not to be ascertained now. Perhaps those achievements of Basil Zaharoff as an angel of peace in South America roused Maxim's jealousy. In any case he went off—after the British Foreign Minister, Lord Salisbury, had consented with a dubious shake of the head—with a thick wallet in his pocket. He promised the Boers one hundred thousand sterling if they would see reason and to the glory of God conclude peace, and to the honour of the City of London enable the gold mines to resume work again as soon as possible ; but after a day or two of negotiation, of which we know nothing, he returned across the Channel a little disappointed. For some months yet the Vickers firm had to go on delivering munitions for the Boer War until the business down there was done and gold mine shares again made a good showing. Sir Hiram had spared the City of London that hundred thousand pounds. Until 1911 the old gentleman remained on the Board of Directors. Then he retired, unwept, unsung, and wrote his reminiscences.

But what did the transaction mean for Mr. Zaharoff? Now, at the turn of the century, let us once again have a look at him, fortune's favourite, as he gets into his shining, lacquered, well-cushioned carriage, with two horses, at the Place de l'Etoile at the corner of the Avenue Hoche. It is a lovely day. The tall gentleman, brisk and active in his well-cut suit, has thrown a light summer overcoat carelessly on his shoulders, perceptibly in the southern manner, inimitably and a little too exuberantly, although that overcoat and that suit were cut in Old Bond Street, and although the tie in the correctly cut waistcoat shines in the dull colours of the foggy island kingdom. No, this gentleman does not wear gaudy ties any more. Where, then, lies the exuberance? In the greying hair? In the short beard, as carefully tended as it is dashing, modelled on that of the third Napoleon? In the steely look? Ah, a man disguised. At any rate no longer the great cat of the old days; this animal has already made its spring. Might this gentleman be the president of a Latin republic, who has signed death-warrants, assassinated his predecessor, and carried off a woman, and now someone else has ousted him and he lives and waits in Paris and conceals himself in suits cut in London? No, that does not fit in either. No one has thrown *him* from the saddle in political war. He is not the kind who falls. Nor is he a speaker; he knows how to be silent. The agate eyes, bold, clear, cold, are so steely that they look as if they were frosted. They are the slightly blinking eyes of a man with long sight, of a man who is accustomed to look ahead over far stretches of land or sea. And now we have him. This man must be an admiral of a southern land, and of the stock of those admirals who for five hundred years have been sailing every sea. Now we are on the right track. A conquistador? Has he not just subdued two States in South America, this Hernando Cortes or Christopher Columbus, fitted out in Savile Row? And how even now he takes a five-pound note from his pocket-book and, for a moment uncon-

sciously reverting to the old habit of a money-changer, tests it against the light, holding it between long, slightly bent fingers—fingers a little stained with tobacco.

Nay, stop. We cannot let him pass thus as he stands there in the prime of manhood. This morocco pocket-book gives us an opportunity with its discreet monogram. It is a little too full, it will soon lose its shape, and then the servant who sits on the dickey and drives the horses will get it. But to-day it, too, is at the prime of its morocco life. And what does it hold ?

Visiting-cards, a new address—41 Avenue Hoche. There he has hired a small, delightfully quiet house, for the Maxim shares which he collected for the sale did not produce only Vickers shares but, what was much better, cash. If he looks out of his windows his eyes fall on the full green of the trees in the Parc Monceau.

Money ? No, there isn't much money to be found in it. A couple of pound notes, a couple of hundred-franc notes, a cheque book. How high is the figure which he can risk writing on a cheque without having to fear that the bank will return it ? Two hundred thousand, four hundred thousand pounds ? He doesn't know exactly, and he does not, at least not yet, want to make the test, attractive though that might be. There is still some distance to go before he comes to the cheque for one million pounds which he lays before the Prince of Monaco. But what is money to him who has seen it flow in from all the four corners of the continents of the globe ? There is no need for him to think of that, as long as, clear-skinned and strong-muscled, he can walk along briskly and actively in his well-cut suit.

He does not want to think about that. But let *us* try to look into the compartments of the morocco pocket-book, and the over-full receptacle of a career. What is this ? A letter ? He thought he had thrown it away. It was from a girl in London, a little actress. What was her name ; he cannot

remember now. She is nameless like a beast, and yet thirty, forty years later there she will be a greyhaired woman emerging out of poverty and misery to be a witness in the case of an obscure person from Wilkomir, the ghost of a past which never existed. But to-day he lives, clear-skinned and strong-muscled, in the sleek skin of ripe manhood as needless of pardon and as free from sin as any other beast which eats its like.

And there is a picture. A photograph. He knows the three and thirty melodious names of the grandee of Spain. There she is, black-haired, slender. Three little girls press their tiny forms against her. What are their names ? Whom are they like ? And of whom will they be the heirs far down time's corridors, so far that in his prime of manhood he does not need to think about it ? But it is pleasant to turn those agate-coloured seaman's eyes to these childish faces, while he leans back negligently in the highly lacquered, well-sprung carriage—steel springs from Sheffield !—and watches in the breeze blue sky stretching up to unfathomable heights peeping through between trees and housetops as he drives past. For he is still young.

He is still young. Scarcely forty-five. He might find other things if he went on searching those well-stocked preserves of his life, if he got to that last and most secret pocket where there is a document once got ready in anticipation of a marriage ; the paper is yellowing. But let it rest untouched. Life still goes upward.

But we are losing our way. It is no accident that we will never get so far in this life as Mr. Basil Zaharoff. And it is not his private life in which we are engaged in spying. We are only interested in his other activities. And by that we mean neither the details of his bank account nor the number of people whom he, with the help of the weapons bought from him, returned to the earth that bore them, some years earlier than would have been their destiny. This bank account of Mr. Basil Zaharoff, whose credits are in figures and whose debits are

men's lives, will have to be taken elsewhere. The books are closed to mortals. But we shall examine the methods, the methods which in the polemics against him are called "Zaharoff's system" and which were often copied by his rivals, but never equalled. It will not be *mal à propos* to turn what we can learn into a text-book for budding armament makers.

What are the characteristics of the "Zaharoff system"? He brought three new elements into the business.

The first we will call the "Balkan" element, as we have seen it at work in the "Tuesday–Thursday" bet, in the story of the chandelier, in the anecdote of the admiral who had a son with a passion for yachting, in the case of Chile, and then, when it is applied on a larger scale and on a wider stage, in the case of the bribery scandals in Tokio, bribery obviously begun by Zaharoff and developed as they could by his rivals. The details of the Tokio case and also of the experiments previously made in South America show the technique and practice of these manœuvres. That anyone could go to a responsible person and say "to-morrow is Thursday" or "I'll sell you a yacht for ten pounds" is clearly a case—in this extreme form—of a story that is actually untrue, or, if it is true, then it is a case of one of those dangerous exceptions which rightly have been transferred from the sphere of history to that of anecdote. The refined technique with its carefully worked out guarantees against the consequences of failure, that method which has been called Balkan, and which we shall now describe more scientifically as "bribery in one State," has three stages and typical elements :

First : There is the preparation, which consists in getting information regarding the person to be bribed—private life, dark places, passions which could be used possibly for purposes of blackmail—then in getting information on the chances of business and the activities of rivals, including price-cutting and industrial espionage. The best illustration of this is the revelation before an English court of the meritorious efforts

of Mr. Thompson. This tireless preparation to ensure the success of the transaction is the reason why, since the South American incident in the middle of the 'nineties, there is usually mentioned, when an armament agent is arrested, that he has had "secret military documents on him"; in other words, that he was "a spy." That is not true. The Zaharoffs do not need documents so as to be able to betray the State aimed at to another; they only betray it to itself.

Second: The corruption itself. This is only seldom done in so crude a manner as in the Fuji case; this obtaining of orders from Japan was amateurs' work, and that is a proof that Basil Zaharoff was not personally mixed up in it. Actually, as we know, it was a subordinate. The more expert at that time worked on a system of several bank accounts and aliases. After the revelations in the Fuji case there was a cessation in attempts to bribe individuals. On principle, it became the rule to corrupt whole groups of responsible officials who then covered each other, for if the discovery of one of them led to an investigation, then the culpability of the whole lot of them would come out. Here is the typical course of practically every case of group bribery—a flare up, a week or two of excitement and indignation—and a quashing of the whole business on military, national, or some other grounds of prestige. Then a couple of years, or a couple of decades, later, as we have often seen, there is an investigation, but by that time it is often impossible even to say where it occurred. Someone became very interested at some time in the documents connected with it, and then forgot to take them back to the archives. As far as the bribery of individuals is concerned, that very seldom took the form of handing out money; it was rather in the nature of "a preliminary contract." The official who yielded was enabled after he retired on pension to get on the Board of this or that company with this or that salary attached.

Third: Transactions under the headings First and Second needed money. But it is worth while, for thus they become

foolproof. Once they were safe, one was able to cover the expenses by increasing the price. If so much had been risked, then it was not only just but in accordance with economic principle to add a risk premium. Remember de S.'s testimony : Zaharoff got the order "although his price was 50 per cent. higher than that of his rivals." Even this reckless rise in prices is typical. It can only be done with safety when the competitors have been reduced to complete silence. Either the order was shared with them, or at least they got a share in the profits. If that precaution is omitted, then somewhere a Reuter's correspondent will buy compromising documents, or a young member of the Opposition party will accidentally get hold of evidence and then some Admiral Fuji ends his career on the scaffold.

So much for the theory of the "corruption of one State" ; we shall meet flesh-and-blood examples. The second pillar of the Zaharoff system is the principle of "bilateral operation." —of serving two sides. That was an original discovery of Basil Zaharoff, that arming of natural opponents, "arch-enemies," and those who actually are engaged in strife. Then it is usually advantageous, as in that South American instance —Chile–Argentina, or Bolivia–Paraguay ?—to put a temporary stop to the fighting so that the armaments can be peacefully delivered and be paid for. Remember, too, the case of the Greek and Turkish submarines ; how all these transactions in their original form have that spice of folly about them ! They are armament jests, so to say, which now are by no means up to the standard of Mr. Basil Zaharoff now that he no longer wears gaudy ties, and they have to be made refined accordingly. The keyword in the refining of the bilateral operation is nationalism. Even in the case of the sale of the submarine the young Zaharoff, with the sure instinct for trade of an inhabitant of Tatavla, had represented himself as a Greek nationalist in Greece and a Turkish nationalist in Turkey. Meantime, in Europe and elsewhere nationalism had not only

made progress, but the industry, too, had progressed, and as a result there arose the cry for a "national industry." For instance, it was quite intolerable to the Italians that they should shoot with any other cannon but Italian-made ones, and similarly with the Russians. From the trade point of view, and from Mr. Zaharoff's in particular, that meant that the firm of Vickers, which was organized mainly for the export trade—and why not, when one possessed such an export specialist?—ran a good risk of losing its foreign markets. This danger reached its height in the year 1905, in that year when Zaharoff's first armament jest had developed to its full extent and changed into real and bloody earnest. In Russia they were using Zaharoff's guns—remember the gallantry with which a lady-killer dealt with the Grand Duke S. In Japan they were using Zaharoff's guns, too—that the cruiser whose building cost Admiral Fuji his life was not the first of its kind has been established. The Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905 brought these weapons out against each other, and on one and the other side they proved their high quality. But this lucrative trade had a painful side to it, because in 1905 not only in Russia and Japan but almost everywhere else could be heard the slogan of "a national industry." We know what that might mean to the firm of Vickers. In Sheffield, London, and the Avenue Hoche there was great confusion for six months. But once again Mr. Basil Zaharoff fell on his feet. Do you want a national industry? You shall have it. It has never been stated that Mr. Basil Zaharoff is only a Greek, Turk, Russian, Englishman, and Frenchman. He can be other men as well.

What now began was a most cunning trade in "national industries," and concealed under it the most cunning application yet made of the principle of bilateral operation which you can imagine. First of all there was only a sort of finger practice on the part of the virtuoso. The scene was Italy; the year 1906. The name of a newly founded, patented, guaranteed national Italian armament industry was Vickers–Terni.

You will note that it is no longer a case of arming an ally of Great Britain ; the reversal of policy of Italy in the Great War was very difficult even for that cunningest of men from Tatavla to foresee.

The second step was more difficult. It led to Germany. Here one had to walk warily ; new foundations made a stir. But Mr. Zaharoff had even during the happy days of the Maxim Nordenfeldt company set great store by attracting distinguished foreigners. Among them was a Herr Loewe from Germany, the partner in a great German munitions concern. Herr Loewe had been taken over from the Board of Directors of Maxims to the Board of Directors of Vickers. In 1903 he died, but now an old friendship was recalled and suddenly, though very quietly and without attracting any attention, the way to the dead Herr Loewe was carefully surveyed and reconstructed. His firm was the Ludwig Loewe A.G. in Berlin, partner in one of the biggest armament rings in Germany, to which also belonged the Berlin–Karlsruhe Industriewerke, the Duerener Metall, Gebrueder Boehler, Mauser, Daimler–Benz, and Silesian mining companies. The other partner in Ludwig Loewe who still survived was a Herr Paul von Gontard—we shall have the pleasure of meeting him later. Ostensibly no change at all was made. But in England a tiny nameplate appeared among the many nameplates on the doors of Vickers' offices which read "London Agents for the German Arms and Munitions Works Paul von Gontard."

The third stage was still more tactfully handled. It was accomplished in France. Here, too, it was quite impossible to "found" a company—the *grande nation* is the most mistrustful of all. But in 1907 there began a very carefully concealed establishment of relations between Mr. Zaharoff and the Schneider–Creusot firm, his great French competitor, who armed everyone anywhere who was not armed by Vickers, Armstrongs, or Krupps. It is extremely difficult to understand at once the growth and the background of this transaction.

The allegation in Communist sources that since 1907 Basil Zaharoff "controlled" Schneider–Creusot is in this form a gross exaggeration, for in Le Creusot there lived also some strong men who were not so easily to be induced to follow the Sheffield lead. But there was a bank belonging to the French heavy industry and to the Creusot concern in particular, the Banque de l'Union parisienne, and after the World War it was suddenly revealed that Mr. Zaharoff, of full intent and very privately, had for years been eating up its shares. In any case the transaction between Zaharoff and Le Creusot was completed; it will occupy us considerably later. It seems that each party hoped to trick the other, rather than resort to open warfare. The result was, in spite of the shoulder to shoulder, bank balance to bank balance theory, the competition was fiercer than ever, a competition which, as we shall see, in any event went on into the Great War. But none the less, in spite of this competition, despite the fact that everywhere in the world there was a call for "national" weapons, that Italians wanted Italian weapons, Englishmen English, Frenchmen French, and Germans German, Mr. Zaharoff went on supplying the goods. "Arch-enemies" before they went to war or after they went to war were from now on no longer compelled to buy their weapons from one and the same company, if that was contradictory to their national ambitions and pride. That their money, or at least a part of their money, with more or less delay, came into one and the same pocket did not trouble anyone much. In any case, no one knew about it, or knew too late. The development of the principle of double-dealing by a detour by way of nationalism was accomplished.

We have dealt with "corruption of one State," and with "the principle of double-dealing." The third principle of the Zaharoff system is what I wish to call "the principle of incitement." Its simplest and most innocent form we have already seen in the classic case of the first purchase of submarines by Greece. If the purchaser hesitates, he is "incited"

by the news that payment in cash will not be asked; he will get credit, delayed if possible until after the victory, if only proper guarantees will be forthcoming. This principle, so dear to any merchant, was of course not discovered by Basil Zaharoff, nor was even that development of it for the special case of armaments whereby a loan was granted to the "needy" State, naturally not in cash, but with this clause in the agreement that the loan would be used to buy weapons from the firm specified. If the armament firm itself did not grant credit, then a banking group closely connected with the firm did. But it did not delve into its reserves to furnish it; it worked by way of overdraft. For the so-called scientific, technical—from the world-market point of view—funding of this financial operation Basil Zaharoff found on the Board of Vickers a specialist of a very high order, Sir Vincent Caillard, a specialist on loans of international standing, a fellow-conservative with, and a friend of, the elder Chamberlain, and in his private life no organizer of armaments but what may be called a minor poet, an amateur who liked to set to music Blake's *Songs of Innocence*, and who also was a well-known dabbler in the occult. After his death some years ago Lady Caillard published a book called *Sir Vincent Caillard Speaks from the Spirit World.* There is no mention of armaments.

The technical financial funding thus was entrusted to Sir Vincent, and he dealt personally everywhere where a regular transaction took place. There is, as you must know, a possibility which in this little guide of ours so far we have overlooked. Wine can also be made from grapes. There were transactions which were perfectly regular. They consisted in the production of guns and the selling of them at a suitable profit, but slightly cheaper than the competitor's guns, to someone who needs them. But the full use of the Caillard device, its application to crude reality, that, as we shall soon see, was the task of Basil Zaharoff.

Now it is not sufficient to induce States, who in principle

are ready to be customers, to give orders by giving them good terms of payment and armament credits. They must all be induced first of all to become ready to be customers. They will only become ready, whether they are republics or constitutional monarchies, when it is made clear to them that they are threatened. Here was the field on which the Vickers–Zaharoff system had to prepare the ground for the use of the Vickers–Caillard system. Here the principle of incitement first comes into its own. I publish here a letter which in 1907—that is, one year after the nameplate with the legend "London Agents of the German Arms and Munition Works Paul von Gontard" was put on the door of Vickers' offices—was sent from Karlsruhe to an address in Paris.

We telegraphed you yesterday as follows: Please await a letter sent to-day to Paris.

The reason for this telegram was that we want to get an item put into one of the most-read French papers, if possible in the *Figaro*, which should go something as follows:

The French Army Command has resolved to speed up considerably the equipment of the army with machine-guns and to provide double the number originally contemplated.

We ask you to do everything you can to get such an item inserted.

The German Arms and Munition Works.

This letter is signed by Herr Geheimer Baurat Paul von Gontard and a gentleman called Rosengarten or Kosegarten. The letter came into the hands of the Socialist deputy, Karl Liebknecht, who read it out in the German Reichstag. What was all this about? The deputies learned that a day or two later from the lips of another deputy, the Centrist member, Erzberger, who later became a Minister:

The letter dates from the year 1907. In that year people in military circles were not so permeated with the doctrine of the value of machine-guns as they are to-day when they are

described as indispensable. In 1907 there were many people even in the German Army who still regarded the machine-gun as a weapon for use against Hereros and Hottentots, and the equipment for that purpose was very small, practically negligible. France however began to put more machine-guns at the service of a modern European army. When I remember this, then the letter of the German armament firm has quite a different aspect than if we do not connect it up with that situation. How often did they tell us in the Reichstag, when in the years 1908, 1909, and 1910 we voted forty million marks for machine-guns—that is, after this letter—we need these guns, we need this new equipment. We agreed to it—because France was so and so far ahead of us in that sphere.

Nor should we fail to notice here that the deputy Liebknecht was murdered, and so was the deputy Erzberger. But Herr von Gontard went on living even after these speeches in the German Reichstag. And also as member of the Board of Control of the Berlin–Karlsruhe Industriewerke A.G., of the Dueren Metall Werke A.G., of the Gebrueder Boehler A.G., of the Mauser A.G. in Oberndorf, of the Daimler–Benz A.G., of the Ludwig Loewe A.G. in Berlin, and the Schlesische Bergwerks-und Hutten A.G. in Breslau.

Would you like to go a little farther into the story of that letter? An unnamed editor in Paris wrote a book which was called *Behind the Scenes in French Journalism*. He, too, knows of Herr von Gontard's letter. And he writes :

The item [wanted by Gontard to appear in the *Figaro*] was not accepted in that form. The falsehood was too crude and the War Ministry in Paris would have at once issued a denial. But some days later there appeared, quite by accident, of course —in the *Figaro*, the *Matin*, and the *Echo de Paris*—a series of articles on the superior merits of the French machine-gun and the superiority it thereby conferred on the French Army. Armed with these newspapers, the Prussian deputy, Schmidt, who was an ally of the German heavy industry, interpellated the Chancellor and asked him what the Government proposed

to do to take counter-measures against this French threat. Bluffed, and at the same time alarmed, the Reichstag, by a big majority and without discussion, granted supplies for the increase of machine-guns.

You can see here the principle of incitement make its detour *via* the "arch-enemy." That is clearly "made in Tatavla," and it does not matter whether or not one can prove that Mr. Zaharoff personally had his finger in this small but very delicate pie of his close business friend. But you can also see that the machinery is not functioning quite perfectly, that the editor of the *Figaro* did not welcome that little item about machine-guns. Zaharoff would not have been Zaharoff if he had not drawn the lesson from such unwelcome difficulties. If he reasons aright, then things must be argued thus. The application of the principle of incitement is a mere gamble so long as the assistance of the Press is not always to be relied upon. That assistance could be granted ; it could also be refused. Then the principle of incitement is foolproof only when one has no longer need to bribe papers because one owns them. No guns without editors. But in the land of the mistrustful *grande nation* the buying of a newspaper by a foreigner is a business that raises a lot of dust, just as much, indeed, as the buying of a munitions factory. The simple principles of logic indicate the solution ; if a foreigner wants to secure the possession of a munitions factory in France by the possession of a newspaper, then he must secure the possession of the newspaper by ceasing, if possible, to be a foreigner. Now we shall see whether the argument was correct. If so, there must be proof of the application of that logic in the life of Basil Zaharoff in the years after 1907. Is there ?

In the year 1906 Mr. Zaharoff allied himself with Loewe–Gontard in Germany ; in the year 1907 with Schneider–Creusot in France. Thereby the commercial-strategic basis for the arming of two arch-enemies by firms having national nameplates was created. Then as a result the principle of incite-

ment was applied in the year 1907 ; there is that letter we have just read sent by Herr von Gontard to Paris. Besides, the letter deals with machine-guns, Zaharoff's speciality. The action succeeded, as we know from what was said by the deputy Erzberger, but it succeeded under circumstances which showed Zaharoff very plainly how insecure was his position in France. Insecure positions were not to his taste nowadays. So he made them secure. Nine months after he acquired an interest in Schneiders in Le Creusot, six months after Herr von Gontard's letter, in June 1908 we find Mr. Basil Zaharoff suddenly in the ranks of the Mæcenases. What in his opinion does the world need most urgently ? Homes for seamen. So the Greco-Russian Englishman felt an inward urge to found a home for French seamen. Why ? We learn that some months later. On the occasion of an exhibition in Bordeaux, Mr. Zaharoff, on the ground of services rendered, unknown to himself, "wins a prize," and on that ground the Minister for the Navy recommends the conferring upon him of the red ribbon of the Legion of Honour.

What was the reason of the founding of a home for seamen ? Why a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour ? Later it was ascertained that the nationality of the new knight had been deliberately made mysterious. Was he a Frenchman ? In this connection there began in November 1908 a minor smoke-screen manœuvre, which was crowned with success. And with such success that within a year, by the end of 1909, the cloud was so thick that the gentleman with the red ribbon in his lapel, who in all probability was a Frenchman, was able to cast an eye upon the Paris Press. Surely a person who had founded a home for French seamen had the right to interest himself in publicity in the land of his choice. There was, of course, no question of political publicity ; it was only a harmless illustrated paper, the *Quotidiens illustrés*, in which he bought an interest. Then six months later, in June 1910, he was appointed *administrateur* by the second annual general

meeting—that is, by himself. And then, for the first time, was it revealed that this harmless illustrated paper was publishing the political paper *Excelsior* "of a type which was completely new in France." Let us sum things up ; to apply successfully "the principle of incitement" a munitions merchant needed a political paper. So the merchant with whom we are concerned, founded a home for seamen in order—*via* the Minister of Marine, and an exhibition in Bordeaux—to get a Legion ribbon to wear in his coat, and that made possible his purchase of an illustrated paper. That paper in its turn came into possession of a political paper. Would you like to take a glance at the future fate of the *Excelsior*? Then let us commit an indiscretion and print a private letter :

EXCELSIOR
PARIS, *November* 4, 1912

M. BASIL ZAHAROFF,
53 Avenue Hoche, Paris.
SIR,

As you are to-morrow seeing the secretary of M. Kokovtzev and are being good enough to advocate the interests of the *Excelsior*, I take the liberty of sending you some cuttings from Paris papers of recent date. This sort of advertisement appears regularly over a year in most Paris papers. Enclosed please find cuttings from the *Matin*, the *Journal*, the *Gaulois*, the *Echo de Paris*, and also from the *Patrie*. If the matter of rates is raised, our rate is four francs per line.

Meantime I take this opportunity in the name of the *Excelsior* to thank you for all that you are willing to and can do in this matter which interests us so greatly.

I am, sir,
Your obedient servant,
WILLIAM HUGUET.

To that I can only add that William Huguet was the advertisement manager of the *Excelsior*, and that "M. Kokovtzev"

was identical with the gentleman of that name who was then Finance Minister of His Majesty the Czar.

The marriage of Mr. Zaharoff with the *Excelsior* was dissolved only in 1920. Then Mr. Zaharoff, as we shall see, had even better reasons than in 1908 to see to it by every means in his power that he was regarded as a Frenchman. Other people, as we shall also see, had equally good reasons for taking the opposite view and for "denouncing" him as an Englishman. The paper which was most unfriendly to Mr. Zaharoff, and was in opposition to England, was the *Petit Parisien*. On December 31, 1920, the *Excelsior* came under the control of the *Petit Parisien*. On January 1, 1921, the *Petit Parisien* began the new year with a new policy, and at a stroke became Anglophil. So Anglophil, indeed, that the other side was compelled to take counter-measures ; the *Matin*, which had been Anglophil hitherto, turned completely round in that same January, began to detest England and instituted a demasking campaign against Basil Zaharoff, hoping to draw him from behind the scenes and place him in the full glare of the footlights.

This transaction may close our text-book for junior armament makers; it is already closed for seniors; we have supported theory with a series of practical instructional examples and now will have no further difficulty in understanding the first really big action of our hero, an action complete in itself and fought out with extreme bitterness. It concerns what we have already called "the conquest of Russia by a munitions agent."

His own personal history, which is identical in time with the "romantic period" in Basil Zaharoff's life—that is, his activity in St. Petersburg in the years 1888–1890—we already know. We know also the real history ; we have already sketched its outlines. Its scene was in the Far East, on the Yangtze Kiang, where another "sick man" on the Hoangho is about to suffer amputation. It is a cheerful piece of surgery with odds laid

on success by England, Germany, Russia, and Japan; not in vain did Mr. Zaharoff interest himself in Tokio in connection with the Chino-Japanese War of 1894. A technical difference of opinion between the surgeons led, as we have seen, to the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905, and in 1905 things went so far in Russia that once again it was possible to believe in her armament. So in 1905 Mr. Zaharoff went off again to Russia. For nearly fifteen years he had not been in Russia—decisive years for him and for his career. In them he had met his duchess; he had fought out to the end his war, first against Nordenfeldt and then against Maxim, and annihilated them both. On his visiting-cards was the modest legend, so important for those who know what it means, *Administrateur delégué de la Société Vickers Maxim*. In his life all was now ordered, regulated, assured, settled. And now, fifty-six years of age, he returned to the scene of his earlier triumphs, the triumphs of an adventurer, the triumphs of youth, apparently endeavoured to wipe out these last fifteen years, and, although his hair is grey and his limbs have stiffened, to take up life again where he left it in 1890. Otherwise, how can we understand the following testimony given by Baroness P., a reserved witness who weighs her words:

It must have been shortly after the Russo-Japanese War when he came back to St. Petersburg. It was then that I first got to know him, but before that I had heard a lot about the *affaires* he had during his first stay, particularly that with K. [the dancer]. Other people who had known him then told me that he had greatly aged. We, six or eight of us, met him the evening he got to St. Petersburg, or the evening immediately following, and a young man [his secretary?] at the Villa R. restaurant. He gave one the impression of a tired man who makes a great effort to appear young and vigorous, the type that one finds so constantly among Americans. His French was not quite correct, but then we spoke Russian and he spoke Russian like a native. He was very attentive to me, but he

conversed at the same time with Staff Col. (later General) von W. on military matters. Suddenly he stopped and quite spontaneously in a low voice paid me a rather heavy compliment on my red hair. I took it lightly and parried it. Then something rather unpleasant happened. Zaharoff, who up to then had been the perfect gentleman, suddenly slapped the table with the palm of his hand and cried out loudly : "Really, there are no other women but red-haired ones. Only red-haired women should be allowed." We were rather taken aback, and tried to laugh it off, but people at the surrounding tables took notice and began to look our way. Zaharoff called the manager, took a roll of banknotes from his pocket-book, held them out, and begged him in almost bitter tones to clear out every woman who hadn't red hair. I am quite sure he wasn't drunk ; he had drunk practically nothing. During this scene he looked positively sinister with his terribly cold eyes. I couldn't help feeling that he was making a test of his own energy. The correctness of his secretary who took no part in it surprised me. Zaharoff repeated his mad demand. Amid a general tumult and indignation on the part of the many people present the manager asked us if we would go to a private room. To my great relief Zaharoff appeared willing. Scarcely had we got to this room ere Zaharoff's secretary disappeared. He was away for ten minutes. Then there was a knock at the door. The owner of the restaurant appeared and said that the wishes of the gentleman had been fulfilled and that there were now only red-haired women left in the restaurant. Zaharoff nodded, the secretary reappeared, but we stayed where we were and didn't return to the main room, so that I can't say from my own observation whether or no Zaharoff's behest had been carried out. I tell you again there wasn't the slightest question of his being drunk.

Thus far the witness Baroness P., and very remarkable evidence hers is. There is certainly no doubt of the truth of it. An invention would have been told quite differently, and in quite different tones. Besides, this mad and in many ways shocking incident is vouched for by another witness, a Baltic

aristocratic lady living in London. But let us leave the man and get back to the business. This "man with the cold eyes" who would soon be sixty and who "seeks to make test of his own energy" found the Russian market very different to what he remembered it. So different, indeed, that there was no chance of success with the old methods of getting orders through women, presents of champagne, and officers of the guard, with none, indeed, of the old methods which had been so effective. There had been something like a run on Russia. All his old opponents were there. At first it was only a matter of general competition for orders, and in that, of course, Zaharoff took his part and the good old Maxim guns went in quantities from England to the East. But then—we are still in 1905—there arose from every quarter that cry for the nationalizing of the armaments industry. How Basil Zaharoff had swift as lightning accommodated himself to the new demand, and, an enthusiastic convert, had already founded in every corner of Europe "national armaments industries" we have described in some detail. But the talk went round, and in other places, too, mothers had produced able sons who concerned themselves with armament production. The result was that the run on Russia which at first was just a struggle for orders became a general confusion of people anxious to found national industries. Armstrong, John Brown, Skoda from Austria, Augustin Normand from France, Blohm & Voss from Hamburg—these are the enemy, which Mr. Zaharoff can still drive from the field. They take a bite somewhere, gobble a mouthful, and then are satisfied. But there are two more serious enemies. The first is Schneider-Creusot, the second Krupp of Essen. For the moment Krupp stays at the frontier and looks in like an unemployed man in front of the window of a delicatessen store, at the dazzling business which is being done inside in Russia the great—till someone admits him. But nobody does. That no one does is the work and one of the chief tasks of M. Schneider from Le Creusot. For it is a matter

here of a French "preserve." And when it is a matter of a "preserve," and since there is already some knowledge of the business methods of Mr. Basil Zaharoff, the Schneider firm, supported by the Quai d'Orsay—to whom the firm has been pleased to yield two of its highest functionaries—begins its fight for Russia by appealing to the savings of France. The small man from Perpignan shall pay for Russian guns! The friend in the East shall protect us against Germany! Let's have a Russian loan! A flood of petty investors' money is diverted by the Quai d'Orsay and the Schneider firm to St. Petersburg. This is the French method of using Zaharoff's loan trick. Zaharoff's loans are supplied by Vickers themselves or by a group of banks; Schneider's guns, delivered to all quarters of the globe, are paid for by the humble French provincials.

Here is a situation with which Basil Zaharoff cannot deal. The mobile capital of the Vickers firm is tied up in the national industries established on Zaharoff's system, and even with these establishments export is falling. Even the strongest individual firm cannot do what the easily inflamed *République française* can do, and the English capitalist has too steady a head to take patriotic action to the advantage of a firm from Sheffield. In short, one individual, Mr. Basil Zaharoff from Tatavla, stands alone against one of the most comprehensive, strongest-financed, masterful, passionate business strokes which ever Paris has staged.

Accordingly the gentleman from Tatavla must find other methods. He strikes when the stroke is least expected, not in St. Petersburg but in Le Creusot. One day the people from Le Creusot learned that this tough Mr. Zaharoff who appears with their very capable agent, a man equal to any other opponent, Councillor Dmitri Rubinstein, in the offices of Ministers or the lobbies of the Duma, and whom, with the aid of their jingling gold from the stocking feet, they hope surely to squeeze out, has suddenly become their partner.

At a stroke, unseen, by way of a rather unwary bank, he had established himself in their midst. And there he sits and is not to be got rid of. They can do nothing, they can gain nothing without him also gaining. Thereby we find Basil Zaharoff's predatory expedition to Le Creusot which we have already analysed, *plus* the foundation of the seamen's home, the Legion of Honour, and the purchase of a paper, taking on a new and its correct significance. Naturally this was by no means the end of the fight. The harpoon fired by Zaharoff is driven in and can't be shaken off, but the whale from Le Creusot puts up a stern struggle. And now the chase begins.

The first scene of action was Putiloff—the Putiloff works, the biggest private armaments concern in Russia, a centre of revolution and therefore fallen into disgrace at the Imperial Court. Schneider–Creusot now began to pump their gold into this concern, which was almost bled white after the Russo-Japanese War. In 1910 the capital of Putiloff was greatly increased. Schneider–Creusot bought shares to the tune of a million pounds, as many as they could get. But the harpoon still sticks. There is no Board room where one will not meet the imperial of Mr. Zaharoff.

Then the whale tried to dodge the pursuer. If it was not possible to swallow up the Putiloff concern undisturbed, then it might be possible to gain one's end by founding a new concern, the shipyards and gun factories in Reval. As a beginning, an order for two cruisers for them would be got from St. Petersburg. And to make certain that this lucrative little business would go on unnoticed they put forward the modest little French firm of Augustin Normand as the promoter of the scheme, intending to show their hand at the last moment when the great Schneider firm would at last have succeeded in establishing a 100 per cent. French armaments industry in nationalist Russia. But just at that last moment events showed that there had been a slight miscalculation. In that last moment it was announced that St. Petersburg was willing to grant the

concession to the modest firm of Augustin Normand for the Reval works, but not to it exclusively. But together with the modest English firm of Beardmore of Glasgow which was also interested. And as behind Augustin Normand appears the typical profile of M. Schneider, so behind the harmless Beardmore firm appears an imperial which is well known to us. For when things are revealed it is seen that the Beardmore firm stands in the same relation to Vickers as Normand does to Schneider. The harpoon was made by a first-class Sheffield firm, and is not easily shaken off.

The critical stage in the chase came nearer. The whale took another tack. If no success was to be gained in the Baltic, some might be gained in the Black Sea. If no success was to be gained by founding a new concern something might be done if entry could be got into an old and obscure concern. Down at Nikolaieff on the Black Sea there had been since 1895 a shipyard which had worked quietly and honestly—until 1911. In 1911 rumours got about that the Duma was on the point of agreeing to a new and comprehensive naval construction programme. That roused the French in St. Petersburg to yet greater activity. Now that they had got the savings of the citizens of Perpignan to the East, they wanted at last to make some profit out of them. A fleet should be built with the French money, the shipyards at Nikolaieff should be enlarged. Then, by gad, there would at last be a French company. The desire was expressed in St. Petersburg. The men who expressed it rattled the gold coins from the stocking feet, and the Russian officials very promptly consented without making any difficulties. So the firm was turned into a French company according to French commercial law, with its registered offices in Paris—65 Rue de la Victoire. This time things were all right. Then unfortunately a mistake was discovered; even here a little flaw appeared at the last moment. Certain shareholders turned up whom no one knew, nor whence they came, nor what was their significance, including a Mr. Putiloff

of the Putiloff works, whose presence in the room was dubiously welcomed. And also, last of the lot, a holder of twenty-five out of sixteen thousand shares—enough to give him just one vote—turned up at the General Meeting at 65 Rue de la Victoire, a gentleman with an imperial whom surely we have met elsewhere. And it was then revealed that not only did he hold twenty-five shares but on a sudden had become the holder of a couple of thousand. The harpoon still stuck.

Now came the crisis, the moment when the whale went mad. The French made a general attack on the officials in St. Petersburg. But the fish now clearly felt itself no match for the harpooner. Messrs. Schneider abandoned the fight themselves ; they turned it over to the French Foreign Office. What happened now was a fine piece of diplomatic tactics. The attention of St. Petersburg was called to the circumstance that this Mr. Basil Zaharoff who was insinuating himself everywhere in the national Russian armaments industry without having proved his worthiness by the furnishing of corresponding loans, was identical with the Mr. Basil Zaharoff who was simultaneously taking a hand in another game, and, in concert with the arch-enemy Krupp, was equipping the arch-enemy Japan with new warships and guns. Then Mr. Zaharoff is the partner of Krupp ! Apart altogether from the immorality of such a transaction, can they tolerate a state of affairs which would let the Krupp firm which had so far been successfully kept out of holy Russia participate in the Nikolaieff enterprise under cover of Mr. Zaharoff. He must be got rid of.

You see, it was a good plan and it was correspondingly effective. The diplomatists of Paris paid equal attention to accomplishing the business of getting rid of him. They contrived to get St. Petersburg to send an official letter in the name of the Government to the Nikolaieff works to the effect that it had now been resolved that only national Russian firms would participate in naval construction. But

Nikolaieff is national French! Thus either the firm can from now on receive no orders, not even for a tiny motor-boat, or all foreigners, without distinction and including Frenchmen, will have to withdraw from the company. The result of this ukase was—it was an added bitterness that it was on the same day as the Duma voted a full hundred and twenty million pounds sterling for the new naval construction programme—that an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Nikolaieff shipyard company was held, and Mr. Basil Zaharoff, with his friend Mr. Putiloff, with Sir Vincent Caillard and Herr Robert Wolff were shown the door. And of course the Frenchmen as well. But the latter came back again by a neighbouring door and meantime had secured different-coloured ribbons for their lapels. A good sound piece of work! Much later it became known that a slight accident had befallen the Quai d'Orsay in spite of all its precautions. Among the Frenchmen who returned by the other door was the Banque d'Outre-Mer of Brussels. It was the pleasure, then, of French diplomacy to put the Belgians under obligations. But it was soon revealed that the shares of the bank were in a majority held not by Belgian shareholders but by two other banks, foreign banks! the Deutsche Bank and the Disconto Bank of Berlin. So the French had driven Mr. Zaharoff out of the company with the accusation that he was a partner of the Germans, and the result of that action was that they themselves now remained in the company as partners of Germans. This little mishap drove the whale from Le Creusot to panic. He had talked of the devil in the shape of Herr Krupp von Bohlen-Halbach, and from now on he saw the devil in every transaction of his own, even the slightest. He could see now nothing but Krupp, and that was what put harpooner Zaharoff at last in a position to deliver the death-stroke.

But we are not there yet. The position now was that our harpooner had been shown the door at the very moment when the Duma voted that hundred and twenty millions. If French

policy was now making progress in Russia, and the halo of Mr. Basil Zaharoff's invincibility had been destroyed, then the work was done. The unexpected, the unprecedented, happened. St. Petersburg began to make trouble over the acceptance of a big consignment of Zaharoff's guns and to discover that the fine goods from Sheffield were not as good as they ought to be. We have come now to 1912, and once again we are at a cheery little war in the Balkans, in Zaharoff's own domain. But this was not all. The Paris paper *Crapouillot* came out with a special issue called "les marchands de canon," in which this sentence can be found :

During the Balkan War Zaharoff armed both parties ; he supported Greece against Turkey, Turkey against Serbia, and a year after, Serbia against Austria.

In a word, it was Zaharoff's own domain. And here immediately after the expulsion from Nikolaieff, immediately after the difficulties over the consignment of guns in St. Petersburg, he had to realize that even in the Balkans people could cross his path. Who ? The new obstinate competitor who lowers prices in all the small States, who is sufficiently familiar with the Balkans, who can press along with Zaharoff's agents up all the backstairs of Ministries is Skoda in Pilsen, and behind Skoda looms the shadow and the purse of M. Schneider from Le Creusot. What more does one want ? Mr. Zaharoff had sent in a little bill in St. Petersburg. But here let us commit another indiscretion, print another private letter and get authentic information. The writer is Mr. Arthur Raffalowitsch, formerly financial attaché in the Imperial Russian Embassy in Paris ; the recipient was the Russian Minister Davidoff :

I have met Mr. Z. He complains of the difficulties he is having to encounter in getting the bill for 1,500,000 roubles put through the Admiralty.

And difficulties like these had never been made in St. Petersburg before for Mr. Zaharoff ! There was no doubt about it ;

France had taken the offensive. In that year, 1912, there was not much in Mr. Zaharoff's influence in Russia. France was making progress.

But what Raffalowitsch has to say later is even more important than that :

Zaharoff thinks that it will take three or four years to build armoured cruisers on the Black Sea in sufficient strength to overawe Turkey. That so far nothing has been pushed on. That Russian factories and banks concern themselves more with the bourse than with anything else.

Mr. Raffalowitsch showed himself pretty acute for he thus concludes :

Z. must have been a little disillusioned here.

The disillusion we already know. But the financial attaché and surely the Minister should have known that people who deal with Mr. Zaharoff should have intelligent ears. He was not complaining of the moral lapses of the Russian banks ; he was neither a censor nor a moralist. And he did not trouble about the war strength of the Turkish cruisers, or, if he did, there is more than one meaning to that, and that was worth considering, as is all that Mr. Zaharoff says or does or doesn't. Might there not be a threat here ?

There was a threat. It was a preliminary to the counter-attack. That Zaharoff scarcely made an attempt to restore the honour of the guns maligned in St. Petersburg, that he simply shipped them again and sent them off on their travels south, this time to Italy, where, fortunately, he controlled a national industry, Vickers–Terni, which, having made slight modifications, duly delivered them to national Italy for the national crusade against the Turks—that must have given the old Russian friends who knew Zaharoff furiously to think. Clearly he is withdrawing from Russia ; Russia has lost favour in his sight. What did the latter say ?

To build armoured cruisers on the Black Sea in sufficient strength to overawe Turkey.

The warning he gave was not understood. A few months later the following telegram from Constantinople appeared in the *Koelnische Zeitung:*

Between the Turkish Government and the English Vickers Company an agreement has been signed which in many ways is of tne greatest interest. By this agreement the English firm is founding a *Société Imperiale Ottomane, Compagnie interessée des constructions maritimes de Docks et Arsenaux.* The shares are not negotiable and can be ceded only with the consent of the other signatory to the agreement. Should the revenue of the company not be enough for the payment of interest and the amortization of the capital, deficits will be covered by the revenues from taxation of the Province of Sivas. The administration of the Ottoman Debt will be entrusted with the collection of these taxes. The new company has a monopoly of orders from the Turkish Navy. The company undertakes to renovate entirely the arsenals at the Golden Horn and at Ismid, to build floating docks to hold tonnage of 32,000, and to build at Ismid a school, houses for workers and officials, and a mosque.

What has happened is clear. Mr. Zaharoff has made good his threat and has gone abroad—to the arch-enemy. Now he proposes to build Turkish cruisers—against Nikolaieff, from which he was ejected! And not only cruisers but the whole Turkish fleet is his; he has a monopoly. And he is guaranteed that there will be other orders. And if there are no profits then he is endowed with the tax-revenue of the Province of Sivas. And who is to guarantee that these revenues will be duly collected? The administration of the Ottoman Debt. A Turkish administration? By no means. There is no need to be anxious for Mr. Zaharoff. The president of the council for the administration of the Ottoman Debt is an old friend. None other than Sir Vincent Caillard, who is also a member of

the Board of Vickers, and who in company with his friend Zaharoff has just been ejected from Nikolaieff. Our anxiety for him can be still further relieved. "The shares can be ceded only with the consent of the signatory of the agreement." Mr. Zaharoff knows how to protect himself against the sort of *coup* that he carried out in Le Creusot, St. Petersburg, Reval, and Nikolaieff. Do not let anyone say that the wolf makes a bad shepherd ; he never shares possession of the sheep. But the most edifying part of the report in the *Koelnische Zeitung* is that not only does Mr. Zaharoff cast his cannon in Turkey and do his business there, but he also builds a mosque, a house of God. There is symbolical value in this. And it may serve as another illustration of the combination of ethics and business if I print here two short letters from the archives of the Krupp firm in Essen—which are apparently not carefully enough closed to the eyes of the profane—although they have nothing to do with the life of Zaharoff. Two years before the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War this authentic German firm wrote this letter :

STEELCASTING WORKS FRIEDRICH KRUPP
ESSEN, *April* 29, 1868

To His Majesty Napoleon III, Emperor of the French.

Emboldened by the interest which Your Gracious Majesty has shown in a humble industrialist and the happy results of his efforts and unexampled sacrifices, I venture once again to approach Your Gracious Majesty with the request that you would honour me by accepting the enclosed atlas. It contains a collection of drawings of various things made in my workshops. I also express the hope that the last four pages on which cast-steel cannon are illustrated, such as I have made for various noble Governments in Europe, will for a moment attract the attention of Your Majesty and enable you to pardon my boldness. With the deepest respect and the greatest admiration.

And back came the answer.

The Emperor has received the atlas with much interest, and His Majesty has given the order to thank you for sending it and to let you know that His Majesty earnestly wishes success and expansion to an industry which has as its object to confer notable benefits on mankind.

They always have untroubled consciences ! And that was written at the time when Mr. Zaharoff was living through that "gap" in his life between 1865 and 1870, perhaps in Wilkomir, perhaps elsewhere.

But we are off the track again. It is more profitable to give here an extract from an article in the *Koelnische Zeitung*, which comments on the item of news which we quoted :

This English concession is far more significant than the engaging of a German military mission. Not only do the English have *de facto* control of the Turkish fleet ; they have now in their hands the entire output of Turkey's yards and arsenals. Thus they are in complete control of the Turkish Navy. What in comparison with that is the fact that a German general is in command of a Turkish army corps ? The Turkish shipping company Machsusseh has also a shareholding in the new company ; its directors are German.

We may note that this time the Germans are in by way of a change. That by way of parenthesis. Odysseus has now come home again to his native shores. As always in his career, that means he is preparing to conquer another flight ; he is beginning on the next spiral of the staircase. If he gets still higher, then, as the crowning achievement, we are due to hear after the duets and trios a symphony for full orchestra. We shall see what happens. We are now in 1913 ; we have still a period for reflection.

The nervousness which was caused in Germany by this *coup* of Mr. Zaharoff was nothing to the nervousness caused in France. This—and the next. Mr. Zaharoff had executed

a *volte-face*, and was back where he had started. One blow was enough. At last the slow intelligences in St. Petersburg had grasped the nature of the threat. If Zaharoff had gone over to the Turks, that meant Turkey was a Great Power. And so the lords of St. Petersburg willingly went to Canossa. Cost what it might, they had to win back Zaharoff for Russia. What was this Schneider firm in Le Creusot ? Flirting with it had been a mistake ; it has, as was now evident, been too expensive. A new wind began to blow over St. Petersburg. The lords of St. Petersburg went to Canossa so hurriedly that, still in 1913, only two or three weeks after Zaharoff's blow in Turkey, the news appeared in the Paris papers—the *Information* of April 24th :

VICKERS AND LE CREUSOT IN RUSSIA

From our Special Correspondent

ST. PETERSBURG.

In well-informed financial circles it is believed that the resolution of the Council of Ministers published yesterday regarding the erection of a private cannon factory at Zaritsyn is a victory for the Vickers firm. Vickers, it is said, intended to demand consent to the erection of a private cannon factory even at the time when Le Creusot was supporting projects which encountered the opposition of the Government. While the representatives of Le Creusot turned their efforts in a direction which could not but lead to failure, the better informed Vickers firm concentrated on getting a new factory put through and assuring orders for it. That none of the causes of the unfavourable position in which Le Creusot now is with regard to their English competitor be left unknown, the painful impression must be indicated which——

And so on. Soon the details of the story were learned. The new works were to be bigger than any hitherto seen in Russia. They would stretch along over two miles of the bank of the Volga ; the heaviest guns, gun turrets, armoured plates, shells

—but let us read what a French source says, one of our authorities, Menevée, the editor of the *Documents politiques* :

This failure of Le Creusot was to be driven home still more sharply. In September of the same year the Russian Government gave the Vickers firm what was virtually a monopoly for the manufacture of guns, while they guaranteed to the factory orders worth at least ten million roubles annually. It was Major-General Serguieff and Captain Gavriloff who dealt with Vickers as Russia's representatives. The reasons for this close connection between the Russian Government and the Vickers firm are the more mysterious as Vickers' prices were higher than Le Creusot's.

But to us who have studied that little guide for armament manufacturers, the circumstance that Vickers gets the business although its prices are higher is not so mysterious as it was to M. Menevée. Have you realized all the significance of that double *coup* of Zaharoff? In 1912 he was squeezed out of a shipyard company in Russia. He avenged himself, while getting a monopoly for the construction of the Turkish fleet, and thereby so terrified the Russians that they at once gave him a monopoly of all Russian artillery orders. That was a masterpiece, a super-Tatavla feat transplanted into the domain of politics. This is the point at which the new ascent on the staircase begins. It is not only a firm in Le Creusot that has been beaten ; it is the Quai d'Orsay, it is France.

Was France nervous ? It was no longer a case of nervousness; it was one of panic. Any straw was clutched at without reason, without plan. The best policy seemed to be to copy this devilish Mr. Zaharoff and try to follow in his footsteps. Had he gone to Constantinople and got a monopoly for the fleet ? Then France would give the Turks armaments credits ; France would invite the Turkish purchasers of guns to Le Creusot. The purchasers bought, even the Minister of Marine in person. Only all that took a month or two, and then it was just a little late. What did Paul Faure say in his speech to the

Chamber ? He said it, alas ! only in February 1932, when we knew all about it :

Turkey has had fifteen loans, of which thirteen are to-day unrepaid. And with that last of these French loans Turkey financed her war against France. I have among my documents a photograph which shows the Turkish Minister of Marine inspecting the works at Le Creusot, being conducted over them by the proprietors who showed him the very last word in what had been invented in armaments. The Turk gave his orders. But the war came too quickly. A few days later it broke out and the wretched Minister could not take his purchases away with him. But because he had French money in his pocket he looked in at Krupp in Essen on his way home and bought there, and at Skoda in Pilsen and bought there—guns which were then sent to the Eastern Front.

But that is to anticipate. At present we are in full peace, at the turn of the year 1913–1914. They could have spared themselves getting into a panic in France—at least so far as the panic was over the national sanctuary in Le Creusot. After the successful harpooning of the whale, and after the successful salvage of the Turkish booty, Mr. Zaharoff, of course again arranged things. If he had been compelled to bring Messrs. Schneider to their knees, was that any reason why he should forget that he was still an accomplice in their enterprises ? Their stable companion—or to use the word more usually employed in industrialist circles—their partner ? At the end of 1913 Mr. Basil Zaharoff was once again gentle as a lamb and a convinced Frenchman. The intention to make this conversion could have been expected months ago by anyone who knew what we know to-day, even before the mind had been laid in Zaritzyn. Now he endowed—no, it was not a seaman's home this time—a chair of aviation in the University of Paris. We may remember that he had done the same thing two years earlier in St. Petersburg and thereby, or rather as a result of the newspaper report of it, had had Mr. Haim Manele-

witsch Sahar from Wilkomir on his track. Whenever Sir Basil endowed anything, he got promotion in the Legion of Honour; we know that. He had been a chevalier since 1908; now in 1913 he became an officer. This time naturally it was not the Minister of Marine, but the Minister for Education and Fine Arts who suggested the promotion. Such a distinction, as we may deduce, will end either in Mr. Basil Zaharoff buying a paper in France or in having a reconciliation with Le Creusot, or both. Do you wish further indication? In a newspaper which is not quite unknown to us, the *Excelsior*, which is the property of the *Quotidiens illustrés*, which in its turn belongs to Mr. Zaharoff, we find an interview with Mr. Francis Barker, who is a member of the Vickers firm. He declares that no greater wrong can be done to the firm of Vickers than to think that its business activities in Russia imply any hostility to France. Why, the contrary is true, as we shall hear:

In the Zaritzyn business French interests, contrary to what has been alleged, were carefully safeguarded. The Russian banks and the Vickers firm recognized the technical value of the Deport patent for long-range guns and have by agreement secured the licence for Russia. And as that licence is the property of the foundry of Châtillon-Commantry, that French company participated in all the orders which came to the new Zaritzyn factory.

If there is still anyone who is not now convinced that Mr. Basil Zaharoff and the Vickers firm are truly friendly to France, there is no help for him. But we seem to sense that somewhere a mine has been laid. We seem to smell a fuse burning. And we wait for the explosion.

It came almost at once, on January 27, 1914. Let us quote documents from the *Echo de Paris* of that date:

PETERSBURG. According to rumour, the Putiloff works in St. Petersburg have been bought by Krupp. If the rumour is confirmed there will be considerable uneasiness in France.

From *The Times* :

PARIS, January 28th (from our own correspondent). No small excitement was caused in Paris to-day by a St. Petersburg telegram in the *Echo de Paris* stating that the Putiloff arms factory had been bought by Krupps. It is well known that the Russian Government has adopted the French artillery models and most of the Russian guns have been constructed at the Putiloff factory with the assistance of the great French firm of Schneider at Le Creusot and of French workmen supplied by that firm.

The announcement brought down a swarm of interviewers upon the offices of the company where no information concerning the telegram had been received, but where it was admitted that the news if confirmed would be very serious, in view of the fact that the Putiloff factory possessed the secrets of the French arms manufacture.

Thus panic in Paris. But perhaps it is premature. Two messages from *The Times* :

BERLIN, January 28th (from our own correspondent). The report of the purchase of the Putiloff works is denied by the newspapers.

ST. PETERSBURG, January 28th. A rumour is circulating in the capital and is attracting some attention in the home and foreign Press. It is to the effect that Krupps have bought the Putiloff works here. We are able to state from information received from official sources that this report has not a word of truth in it.

Heaven be praised ! Now we can be reassured. Or is that premature, too ? What is this that Reuter telegraphs from St. Petersburg ?

. . . this rather is the truer version. The Council of Ministers decided for the foundation of a private Russian company with the co-operation of Vickers. As the reason for the decision it is explained that of the great European armaments firms Vickers has the greatest experience.

Stop. What has the firm of Vickers to do with this affair? Have we not made Mr. Zaharoff an officer of the Legion of Honour? Surely he won't, with the arch-enemy——

Back to Paris once again. Back to the *Excelsior*. Back to Mr. Francis Barker:

I say most emphatically that the Vickers company has nothing at all to do with the Putiloff business. In Russia it has no relations with the Krupp firm and has never had any intention of combining its interests with that firm.

Then at least we can be reassured of the immaculacy of Mr. Zaharoff's business methods. Krupp knows nothing of Putiloff; Vickers knows nothing of Krupp; Schneider, who is the most aggrieved, buries himself in silence and gets the sympathy of the nation. But stop again. Let us make inquiry in Le Creusot itself:

On inquiry at the Schneider offices I learn that negotiations actually are going on in St. Petersburg—but not concerning the purchase of the Putiloff works by Krupp, but only regarding an increase in its capital with the help of Krupp and the Deutsche Bank. Obviously any such transaction would bring the Putiloff works under the control of the Krupp firm and other German companies.

Finally, *deo gratias*, it all chimes in fairly well if we listen attentively. There is no question of a purchase by Krupp of the Putiloff works, but only an increase of capital. Thus there was still a chance for Paris to do something. There might still be some saving and patriotic people left in Perpignan——

But this is getting a tiresome business. We can get no more information from the Paris newspapers, so we may be well advised to turn to the reminiscences of that anonymous editor-in-chief from Paris, which were published in the Berlin *Deutsche Rundschau* in 1925. Does he know of the incident? He does:

The telegram in the *Echo de Paris* actually did cause great disquiet. The public, uninformed and simple as usual, thought that the secrets of French gun construction had fallen into the hands of the Prussians. The truth was that there were no secrets, for the French factories had been delivering the 75-mm. guns for a long time to Italy—a member of the Triple Alliance —and to Bulgaria. But it was necessary to add fuel to the fires of political incitement, and nothing is so useful for the stirring up of public opinion as talk of secrets and their betrayal.

There could be no question of preserving the secret of the 75-mm. gun, for the whole world knew it; nor of preventing Krupp from getting into Putiloff, for it had been there for a long time. The purpose of the news was to bring pressure to bear on a group of French banks to loosen their purse-strings for patriotic and national reasons. And as these banks showed no particular inclination to do so, the spectre of Krupp was invoked.

Here is another tune altogether. To invoke the spectre? Who did the invocation? Let us investigate further, and quote the speech in the French Chamber of M. Albert Thomas, later Minister of Munitions and Director of the International Labour Office:

But what especially attracted attention was the fact that at the very moment when these firms were acting as if they were opponents, when Vickers seemed to be in deadly strife with Le Creusot and when we were ready to get excited over such damaging of our interests by our allies, at that very moment the apparently hostile firms had long ago come to an agreement and were working into each other's hands.

And then comes this sentence

The Russian newspapers have named Mr. Basil Zaharoff as the most active agent, the most energetic standard-bearer, of the Vickers company, as the most feared rival of Le Creusot.

That is an historic moment in our biography. It is the first time that the gentleman with the imperial was named

from the tribune of the French Chamber. It won't be the last time.

So this was a case of Mr. Zaharoff again. And who were his accomplices ? We can get some information on that point from a pamphlet, published by that energetic and watchful body the Union of Democratic Control in London, called *The Secret International*, where we shall find the story of the end of this business :

The false report is said to have been provoked by Raffalowitsch in collusion with Suchomlinoff, the Russian Minister of War, after an understanding had been arrived at with Zaharoff. There was immediate panic in England, France, and Germany, and excitement in Paris was only allayed when subsequently the news was sent through from St. Petersburg that the Putiloff works required another £2,000,000 and would be pleased if they could obtain it from Schneider–Creusot. Schneider–Creusot accordingly put the required capital at the disposal of Putiloff and at the same time a new Russian loan of £25,000,000 was raised in France. Vickers, Ltd., were able to obtain their share, and *The Times* Paris correspondent was able to announce that during the preceding months orders to the amount of £6,500,000 had gone to Great Britain.

To which we may add that this is not the first time we have met the Mr. Raffalowitsch here mentioned. He is our old friend, the former attaché in the Russian Embassy in Paris, and an old friend of Basil Zaharoff, and earlier we printed his letter to the Minister Davidoff. He is known not only to us but also to that anonymous Paris editor whom we have already quoted. He is able to tell us that this Mr. Raffalowitsch had, in the years before the war, undertaken, with sacks of gold, the biggest and most unscrupulous campaign of corruption that has ever been known in the whole history of the Press. Thus a professional corrupter of the Press, His Excellency the War Minister of Russia and Mr. Zaharoff—it all tallies. We have here only another application of Zaharoff's "prin-

ciple of incitement," but on a large, a very large, scale, and at a difficult hour. He has beaten Le Creusot in Russia and thus reduced his share of their profits ; now he proceeds to increase it again. With whose money ? With the money of humble men of Perpignan. And for whom does he get the money ? For Russia. A good piece of business for him, for he gets a commission in the shape of orders amounting to six and a half million pounds. The ambitious young man who in 1877 sold to his Greek fatherland the first inefficient submarine, has by 1914 grown to be the biggest shark that ever swam the armament seas.

But we have not quite cleared up the position of the two other armament firms. Did Schneider know all about it all along ? We may believe so after what we have heard. But Krupp ? Krupp obviously was brought into the affair by Zaharoff only to scare the little French provincials. Accordingly there still remains something that needs to be explained. Once again we return circumspectly to Russia. There the archives have been opened, and much of their contents been published, much which is little known, or even completely unknown to people in the Western countries. In an official Communist periodical called the *Weekly of the Executive Committee of the Communist International* we find an article by Leonid called "The Policy of Armaments-Capital" this passage :

To every political combination which Vickers organized in the military sphere it created another combination in opposition. In the closest connection with Vickers and in the same manner Schneider–Creusot and Krupp conducted their business. Two years before the World War Krupp, Schneider, and Blohm & Voss—the leading German naval shipyard—organized a syndicate to get control of the Russian Putiloff works, which they finally succeeded in doing after an understanding with Vickers–Armstrong. Simultaneously with this reconciliation of the German-French-Russian armaments capitalists began

the preparations for the German-French-Russian war. While Poincaré was in St. Petersburg to place France's signature to the war-treaty against Germany, Krupp and Creusot signed an agreement by which both parties pledged themselves to come to an understanding respecting the division of orders for armaments which had prodigiously increased, and not to compete against each other. More, the French company pledged itself to support Krupp against any other German competitor; if, for instance, the German Ehrhardt company submitted a lower tender than Krupp, then Schneider must underbid Ehrhardt, and even at a loss get hold of the order.

That completes the picture. In the armaments industry there are no losers. The only loser was the humble citizen of Perpignan who never got his money back. There was also another loser—France.

How did France hit back? How far was she on her guard? How did the people in the Quai d'Orsay judge what was happening? The best evidence is in the *Journal officiel.* There under date July 31st—the day on which Jean Jaurès was murdered—you may read: "LEGION OF HONOUR. To be Commander—Monsieur Basil Zaharoff." And as reason for this laconic statement—"services exceptionnels."

Thus there broke out—— No, not yet; we don't let it break out yet. We must first look again at the Vickers company, which under Basil Zaharoff's guidance has so successfully expanded. What was its position on that 31st of July, 1914?

Naturally the factories of the original firm are in England. Then there are two shipyards whose acquaintance we have made already—Barrow, whose manager did business with Admiral Fuji, and Beardmore, under cover of which Sir Basil laid his ambush in Reval. But also—but there is no need to burden these pages with more names.

In Italy? We already know of Vickers–Terni. The new partners thus belong to the Triple Alliance. Also we add

that similar concerns were founded in Canada, in Spain, and in Japan. They need not detain us. More interesting is the position in France. According to Otto Lehmann-Russbueldt, who drew his information from the Moscow archives :

Zaharoff in 1914 controlled the French firms of Creusot, the steelworks of Henécourt, the Châtillon-Commantry with a total capital of three hundred and twenty million marks.

We can extend his information a little ; Mr. Zaharoff's peaceful invasion of France had been conducted with rather more energy than that would suggest. In the Austrian port of Fiume there is the Whitehead torpedo factory which, as we learn from our French authority, Menevée, is "the Austrian branch of Vickers" ; for its part the Whitehead concern in Fiume, in conjunction with the mother firm Vickers, founded just before the war a French branch in Saint-Tropez, and on the Board of Directors sits Mr. Zaharoff. He holds two shares ; we know his modesty. And at the same time Mr. Zaharoff bobs up on the Boards of the French company "Le Nickel," which owns the nickel deposits in New Caledonia and is controlled by Rothschilds :

Our choice fell on Mr. Basil Zaharoff who, because of his great experience and his many connections with industry, will be a most valuable acquisition to our company.

We can understand the conviction of the "Le Nickel's" Board, and we share it. In Turkey there are the shipyards at Ismid, in which Turks and Germans are partners. In Russia there are the Reval yards with the French as partners ; the big factory at Zaritzyn ; two others with whose names we will not trouble the reader, and then there is the situation in the Putiloff works with Schneider on the one hand and Krupp on the other as partners. (What did Mr. Francis Barker say in that interview which he gave to the *Excelsior* ? :

I say most emphatically that the Vickers company has absolutely nothing to do with the Putiloff affair.)

There remains only the position in Germany itself, the Loewe–Gontard connection. The concern as a whole was in good trim and it would be a good thing to be on its Board.

But who really was beside him on these boards on July 31, 1914, the day before the World War broke out. In England there were among the chief shareholders of Vickers Ltd. :

4 dukes and marquises
50 viscounts and barons
20 knights
3 members of Parliament
21 officers
6 journalists

and among those who were shareholders of some branch of the combine at different dates were taxicabmen, municipal employees, printers, stationmasters, foundrymen, shoemakers, woolpickers, hotel employees, druggists, farmers, policemen, teachers, fishmongers, sea-captains, an air vice-marshal, a civil servant in the Foreign Office, a professor of music, doctors, and in all of them a remarkably high percentage of clergymen.

Further—— But let us hear more about the shareholders from the speech in Parliament delivered by Philip Snowden in March 1914 :

Now who are the shareholders ? It would be too long for me to give more than a very short selection from this list, but I find than hon. members of this House are very largely concerned. Indeed, it would be impossible to throw a stone on the benches opposite without hitting a member who is a shareholder in one or other of these firms. The hon. member for the Osgoldcross division of Yorkshire—I congratulate him on his election last week as Hon. President of the Free Church Council

—is the great imperialist. I find that he is the holder of 3,200 shares in John Brown's and 2,100 shares in Cammell Laird's. Another of the members for Sheffield figures in practically every list, as he figures in every debate in this House when there is a possibility of more money being spent on arms and ships.

It may serve to console us that on that 31st of July, 1914, Mr. Basil Zaharoff did not stand alone in the world; he had a few partners. Those with him, including politicians and officers of high rank, were during the next four years able to share in the enterprises captured abroad by the masterly achievements of "the Zaharoff system." But perhaps in March 1914 Viscount Snowden was seeing only bogymen, that all this was an isolated phenomenon, and that things were not really so bad. Let us quote, then, a few lines from people who are not members of Viscount Snowden's party. Let us go east again to the statistics of the *Weekly of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.* There you will find:

The brilliant collaboration of armaments-capital and the Governments with the united aim of a world war was founded on the narrowest basis of private capital, even on the identity of the two powers. In every land the armaments firms were all-powerful with the heads of the navy and then with the general staff diplomacy and the semi-official military associations.

In England: The director of construction and the chief technical adviser at the Admiralty from 1912 to 1923, Sir Eustace Tennyson-d'Eyncourt, is to-day consulting naval architect and engineer and adviser to Vickers-Armstrong. Lord Southborough, technical adviser, etc., was from 1912 to 1917 Civil Lord of the Admiralty. General Lyttelton was Chief of the General Staff, and he had a brother who also was a director of Armstrongs. Lord Sydenham and Admiral Ottley, both Armstrong directors, were both secretaries of the Committee of Imperial Defence, the highest military organization of the British Empire, which actually determines, the whole

world-policy of England. In the National Service League, the greatest of the militarist associations, were eight presidents and directors of English armament firms. On the committee of the Navy League were four men who were joint owners in Italian, Austrian, and Russian firms constructing war material. Just as close was the connection with the British Foreign Office. The *Economist* had to admit (1913–14) that the Foreign Office in the course of its diplomatic labours saw to it that Vickers and Armstrongs got orders for munitions of war. The biggest English Bankers (Rothschild, Cassel, etc.) made similar conditions when they were granting loans to foreign Governments.

In France: Schneider–Creusot, who produced about 60 per cent. of the total munitions output of France, nominated the Ministers of Marine, were all-powerful in the Army Commission of the Chamber and had in their own service two admirals—and later a third—and a brother of Clemenceau.

In Russia: The whole military hierarchy of Czarism was honeycombed from top to bottom with agents of armaments firms. As early as the days of the Russo-Japanese War, Basil Zaharoff, the representative of Vickers, through the medium of General Kuropatkin and other army leaders, secured very large orders for weapons and munitions. Later it was the notorious Dmitri Rubinstein, "Rasputin's banker," who secured the order for Schneider–Creusot for Russia's field artillery.

In Germany: The armour-plate king, Stumm, was all-powerful in the Foreign Office when a clique of his relatives, State Secretary Wilhelm von Stumm and State Secretary von Kuehlmann, Counsellor of Legation Ferdinand von Stumm, and Departmental Chief Karl von Schubert held key positions. The *Post*, extremely Chauvinist and always inciting to war, was owned by the Stumm concern. And in that same Stumm concern sat as a sort of superintendent, the French Secretary of Legation, Count de Waldner.

That all rings true. But should we trust these Communists without more ado? The matter is much too important; we must be really convinced. So let us choose at random one

of these daughter firms, for instance, the Société française de Torpilles Whitehead, which we have heard about before, and let us see the original list of shareholders :

The Armstrong Whitworth Company	180
Mr. Francis Henry Barker, London (Vickers) ..	2
Vickers Ltd., London	178
Frau Leopoldine Hoyos (wife of Graf von Plessen-Cronsten, German Minister)	14
Frau Liliane Hoyos (wife of Graf Adolf von Reventlow-Criminil)	14
Mr. James Beeton Whitehead, British Minister ..	78
Frau Agathe-Maria Gubertine Whitehead (wife of Herr von Trapp, Austrian naval lieutenant)	15
Frau Margarethe von Bismarck (widow of Prince Herbert von Bismarck, of Friedrichsruhe, near Hamburg)	14
The French Rear-Admiral Aubert	2
Mr. Basil Zaharoff	2

Thus Mr. Basil Zaharoff is a partner with an English Minister, the wife of a German Minister, a French rear-admiral, the wife of an Austrian naval officer, a member of the "Pan-German" family of Reventlow—and the widow of Herbert von Bismarck, daughter-in-law of the Iron Chancellor. All these met in unity in France to manufacture French torpedoes ! This is confusion itself.

And we feel distinctly anxious whether Mr. Basil Zaharoff can produce enough money for so many protégés. Has he to let his own family starve ? We need not be over-anxious. In the case of the parent company, Vickers, alone, in one year the assets rose more than a million and a half pounds, the dividends paid were 12½ per cent., and the capital in the last two years was raised to practically two million pounds. Net profits ? We can hear about these from that speech by Viscount Snowden.

I find in the year before the scare Messrs. Vickers' profits amounting to £424,000. Two years after that they were nearly double that amount. Every year since the success of their intrigue their profits have gone up—£474,000, £544,000, £745,000, £872,000.

and he went on:

What is the obstacle in the way of better understanding? Lord Welby, who has held the highest and most responsible posts as a permanent civil servant in this country was speaking on this question a few weeks ago, and he said: "We are in the hands of an organization of crooks. They are politicians, generals, manufacturers of armaments, and journalists. All of them are anxious for unlimited expenditure, and go on inventing scares to terrify Ministers of the Crown."

It is almost intolerable to hear such malice towards so brilliant a business success. Much better to listen to Mr. Douglas Vickers himself, who must know the facts. This is what he said in a speech:

There were people who maintained that armaments should be taken out of private hands, and who believed old stories about the influence which armaments firms were said to have exercised in the past in the interests of war. There was not a shadow of truth in such stories.

This declaration from so authoritative a source can hardly fail to reassure us completely. But yet there is a passage in that English pamphlet *The Secret International*:

The files at Somerset House show that in the summer of 1914 there was a feverish activity to deal in armament shares, and with the coming of the war we find a number of well-informed people, certain prominent bankers and Sir Basil Zaharoff himself, increasing their holdings. Amongst the shareholders at that time were various important people closely associated with the Government.

And once again let us quote Viscount Snowden :

Whether it be an Austrian, German, or British ship to sink in battle, the directors and stockholders of the munitions firms can be counted upon to applaud. They will throw their hats in the air and cry : "More ships ! More profits ! More dividends !"

And from a commentary on this speech of Snowden in the *Arms and Explosives Journal*, the organ of the industry :

Some people never will understand business.

And so broke out—— No, not yet. One must not think that humanity took no measures against this conspiracy. Here is the same Mr. G. H. Perris who, a month or two before that 31st of July, 1914, when Mr. Basil Zaharoff was again in search of honours, delivered a speech at the World Peace Conference in The Hague in which he disclosed, so far as he then knew them, the methods of the various Mr. Zaharoffs :

for whom the English poet Kipling has coined the description "half a devil and half a child."

And there came to him a vision and he cried :

Many here know the famous painting : "The Retreat from Russia." Another picture takes shape before my eyes. There it is not the conquered legions of Napoleon who are struggling in the snow ; there I see the army of the toilers in this world defeated as always, fighting as always for the fruit of their toil and a juster fate. It seemed to me that I passed through the masses of the desperate on the battlefield of the daily struggle for existence. And I came to the rearguard and saw—just as in that picture—the shadowy shapes of the Cossacks and among them, bent on robbing the dead and dying, the plunderers of corpses who follow on the heels of any retreating army. I went closer to them. And to my astonishment I saw that they were not the jackals that poets and historians have pictured them. Nay, these were no ordinary thieves. And among them

I saw one who was an honourable English gentleman who wore the Grand Cross of the Bath and, as it had to be, the Order of Jesus Christ of Portugal.[1]

The report of the session adds this : "This resolution was adopted unanimously."

And so at last—the war broke out.

[1] G. H. Perris, *The War Traders* (report of the Hague Conference).

III

ALMOST A MYTHOLOGICAL FIGURE

Now we come to the deeds and adventures of Mr. Basil Zaharoff, who created the elaborate machinery which we have described, during the years 1914 to 1918. Perhaps the best thing to do is to begin with the accomplishments of the machinery itself, even if all that happened was largely due to the fact that the machine slipped out of Mr. Zaharoff's hands, became independent, took on life of its own, and could no longer be controlled.

During the years 1914 to 1918 the Vickers company delivered:

4 battleships
3 armed cruisers
53 submarines
62 light ships
3 auxiliary cruisers
2,328 heavy naval guns, field guns, and howitzers up to a calibre of 45 cm.; and, further, more than
100,000 machine-guns of the well-known type invented by Sir Hiram Maxim
an unknown quantity of smaller guns
an unknown number of tons of armour plates, and
5,500—let us put it into words—five thousand five hundred aeroplanes.

Even on the basis of peace-time prices that represents a prime cost of several hundred millions of pounds. The stated net profits of the company alone amounted to thirty-four million pounds, or three times its capital, and of that 67 per cent. went to Mr. Basil Zaharoff. Later, it was stated that the profits of Mr. Zaharoff and his colleagues in England should be reckoned at not more than "20 per cent. more

than the average net profits of the last two business years before the war." But do not let us be anxious for our hero on that account, for when Mr. Lloyd George later became Minister of Munitions and began to control prices he alleged—but let the minister speak for himself:

The 18-pounder, when the Ministry of Munitions was started, cost 22s. 6d. per shell. A system of costing and investigation was introduced and national factories were set up which checked the process, and a shell for which the War Office at the time the Ministry was formed cost 22s. 6d. was reduced to 12s., and when you have 85,000,000 shells that saved £5,000,000. There was a reduction in the price of all other shells, and there was a reduction in the Lewis guns. When we took them in hand they cost £165 and we reduced them to £35 each. There was a saving of £14,000,000, and through the costing system and the checking of the national factories we set up before the end of the war there was a saving of £440,000,000.

These four hundred and forty millions are not the net profits of the British armament industry; they are a deduction from its profits, the sum by which the profits were reduced, thanks to the activity of the Minister of Munitions. Did he come up against the master of the industry, Mr. Zaharoff, in consequence? We can be assured on this point, too. The two gentlemen found pleasure in each other, and this discovery was fateful, even decisive. For Mr. Zaharoff? No; for Mr. Lloyd George—and almost for England. But there is a good long way to go ere we come to that. At the moment deliveries went on, and to delight those who like figures we quote the total orders of England:

25,000	guns
240,000	machine-guns
4,000,000	rifles
258,000,000	shells and shrapnel shells
10,000,000,000	cartridges

At the beginning of this transaction the total national debt of the countries concerned was about £224,000,000 ; after the purchases and the acquisition of these guns, rifles, shells, and cartridges it was one and a half milliard pounds sterling.

We have still to mention here some unfortunate incidents, or rather minor flaws, in the functioning of Zaharoff's armament machine, but these were too slight to disturb either the good humour or good conscience of the maker and the officers, politicians, and priests who shared in his international company. None the less, Turkish guns served by German artillerymen which bombarded the English at the Dardanelles had been delivered by Mr. Zaharoff. And so far as it is possible to deal in the hypothetical in strategy, we must admit that, if there had been an inferior Turkish artillery at the Dardanelles, the Straits would have fallen, and the fall of the Straits would have meant an earlier end to the war, and an earlier end to the war would have rendered unnecessary the introduction of compulsory service in England, that compulsory service which sent to Flanders those small shareholders of Mr. Zaharoff, "taxicabmen, municipal employees, printers, station-masters, foundrymen, shoemakers." They died there, but their heirs remained to share in the increased profits of Mr. Zaharoff's factories. In the Narrows a British ship struck a Turkish mine and went up in the air ; the mine was "Made in England" ! But when eleven years later Mr. Arthur Ponsonby, M.P., asked Mr. Austen Chamberlain, the Foreign Secretary, about this mine of 1915, and quoted a report of the *Daily Chronicle*, which said that again an English firm was delivering munitions to the Turks, the Foreign Secretary agreed as to the facts, but on the other hand declared that it was quite impossible that there should be ever again a war between Britain and Turkey. (That was what happened in 1926 when the League of Nations had decided in the Mosul dispute for Britain and against Turkey, and when in Constantinople they were actually beginning to make earnest preparations for a war with Britain.)

But once more we are straying into the future. Let us go back again and study a little more scientifically the offshoots of the parent company. What was the position of "Le Nickel," the New Caledonian company backed by Rothschild, which, as you may remember, co-opted Mr. Zaharoff to its board of directors with flattering eulogy? Nickel is to armaments manufacturers what bread is to the hungry. Germany has no nickel. But it possessed a "metals company" in Frankfort whose chief shareholder was Wilhelm II; another shareholder was Herr Krupp. In the years before 1914 this company bought and stocked all the nickel it could get—delivered by "Le Nickel," in other words by Mr. Zaharoff and Rothschilds. And then the war broke out. Now let us see what the French Senator Gaudin de Villaine said in a speech in Parliament in January 1917:

On October 1, 1914, a Norse three-master loaded 2,500 tons of nickel in the harbour of Freisund, New Caledonia, consigned to Hamburg and intended for the Krupp works. Krupps had paid half the money in advance. The ship was stopped on the high seas by the *Dupetit-Thouars* and taken to Brest, where it was declared a prize by the courts. Then the order came from Paris to let the ship go. The local authorities refused. On that there came from the Minister fresh instructions confirming the order of release. On October 10th the ship resumed its voyage.

What happened then? Let us go on listening to Monsieur Gaudin de Villaine, who, it seems, does not sit on the board of any armament company:

In 1915, 4,606,834 kilogrammes of raw nickel ore went from Nouméa without any objection being raised and without that most important condition being laid down, a condition made obligatory in Canada, that the nickel should be consigned only for the use of the Allies.

2,599,427 kilogrammes went to the United States, which for

years had not bought from New Caledonia. They could be landed only after a lot of chicanery.

The "Société du Nickel" attempted a diversion by trying to throw suspicion on its competitor, the "Hauts Fourneaux de Nouméa," for making mysterious deliveries to the United States.

But it is a mistake to irritate competitors. When one does, then things happen like the publication of the following letter in the *Liberté*:

To the Editor

Sir,

As our company is mentioned in your issue of to-day in connection with the nickel affair, we have the honour to state that not a single kilogramme of nickel from our Caledonian field has gone to America except with the provision that it is destined for France or one of her Allies.

We are the only producers who are completely independent of the international trust which before the war was represented in Europe by the Metals Company of Frankfürt.

It was not our company which had an agreement with Krupp as a result of which even after the outbreak of war certain consignments were sent to Norway.

That, too, did not do Mr. Basil Zaharoff any hurt. It was a slight nuisance to business; that was all. And on the other side he could appeal to other letters from which it was clear that not only did he deliver to the enemy, but the enemy delivered to him. For instance, there was a letter from Germany, written by the Luebeck Senator Possehl, a big steel industrialist:

Luebeck, *July* 31, 1914.

To Bosshardt Bros., St. Petersburg.

The question of deliveries of block steel and any other material to Russia has now become very dubious since war on the Continent may break out any day.

If Sweden becomes involved in the war, then there will no

longer be any possibility of exporting to Russia. In any case our Swedish works will do their utmost to speed up delivery, which at the present time we think will be very convenient for Messrs. . . .

We consider that, if war breaks out, the German fleet will blockade the Finnish ports and prevent shipping reaching St. Petersburg. We ask you to speak on this very confidentially with Messrs. . . . and you can be assured that nothing will be revealed by us. On that point you need have no fears.

As regards ingots we beg to advise you that we shall have to raise the price of nickel ingots very considerably. But there is no one who can supply these more cheaply, and can also rely on the fact that you have the certainty of securing from us nickel of a definitely superior quality.

Yours faithfully,

L. Possehl & Co.

The firm were prosecuted before the Leipzig Court. It came out in the proceedings that the name left blank was that of Putiloff. Herr Possehl was acquitted. No, there is no reproach to be levelled against our hero, joint-owner of these Putiloff works which get their nickel from enemy countries. Or should we mention the fact that the British fleet at the Battle of Jutland was equipped with telescopic sights which six months previously had been delivered to a Dutch company by the German factories of Zeiss in Jena and Goerz-Anschuetz? We prefer to leave it to Mr. Zaharoff to tell us something on the subject of "delivery to the enemy." In the year 1920 Herr Krupp himself was prosecuted in Leipzig—do not be alarmed; nothing happened to him. Now Zaharoff, as we shall see later, had during the war created for his own ends a news agency, the "Agence Radio," and during the Krupp trial this agency suddenly became communicative. When Mr. Zaharoff becomes communicative we must pay close attention:

The Krupp company was accused of having given to England the patent for the production of shrapnel fuses. In this connec-

tion the Krupp firm some time ago raised an action against the Vickers company before the Anglo-German arbitral court. These fuses in England bore the mark "Kpz. 9604," which showed they were Krupp fuses. The Krupp company asked for compensation at the rate of one shilling per fuse. The sum of 123,000,000 shillings was at stake. From that figure can be reckoned the contribution which Krupp made to the deaths of German soldiers.

On the other hand, the same firm during the war delivered considerable quantities of other material, especially barbed wire, to neutral countries, particularly to Holland and Switzerland, with full knowledge that the consignments were intended for enemy countries.

The article of the criminal code under which the charges are brought provides penalties up to penal servitude for life.

That is something more than amazing. Basil Zaharoff, who is a master of silence, becomes communicative over malpractices in the armaments trade! Did he mean just to let us know that the other side was just as bad? Or did he want to explain how he had turned his good relations with the enemy countries to the advantage of the Allies? Or did the directors of the Agence Radio, in which at that time Basil Zaharoff was rather less interested than he had been, try to win back their powerful patron by telling him how voluble they could be, how much they knew about the affairs of the armaments industry, and that if to-day they used that knowledge against Krupp, to-morrow it could be used against himself if he left them in the lurch? As we have to do here with Mr. Zaharoff and with French journalists, the chances are that the more complicated explanation is the more plausible. But the most plausible is hidden beneath the words, "In this connection there was an action before the arbitral court," which leaps to the eye of the reader of the Agence's report. Here there is no question of any threat on the part of the Agence to Mr. Zaharoff, but a threat by Mr. Zaharoff to Herr Krupp, who is now involved in criminal proceedings; you've claimed

123,000,000 shillings from me; be careful or I shall be more communicative still. Actually this is the right track, for in that special number of the Paris *Crapouillot* attacking *les marchands des canons* we find this note in small type:

Krupp did not pursue this claim to the end, but accepted from Vickers by way of compensation a share in the steel and lead works of Mier in Spain.

So the threat was effective. Krupp did not fight the case to the end. An arrangement was come to and there is no information whether the Agence Radio ever mentioned Krupp again from that day to this.

That was how it stood with the machinery, its working, its achievement, and its failures. But how was the constructor of this machinery, Mr. Basil Zaharoff himself, faring; what did he do or leave undone in these years 1914 to 1918? The line is a very zigzag one. We have already learned that in the months before the war broke out he had multiplied his holdings in armament stock. That he himself had put fuel to the fire, as, for instance, in the *Echo de Paris* case, we well know. The outbreak of the Great War was therefore demonstration by example, the crowning achievement, if indeed he ever looked at his own deed, ever looked himself in the face. But that, curiously enough, he apparently did not do. The Russian baroness P.—the same lady who was a witness to the scene which Zaharoff made in that St. Petersburg restaurant after the Russo-Japanese War—reports that she met Zaharoff again in London in the August days of 1914 and "he had completely changed and went about in the first days of war like a man who has robbed someone." That may have been good observation. He had put power into the machine and now it was out of control. It was gliding away from him, with a life of its own in it. Like all the kings, generals, statesmen, and armament brokers he, too, "had not willed it," when the

guns began to sound in all four corners of Europe. "Half a devil and half a child"—Perris had used the phrase of him at that vain Peace Conference at The Hague.

Zaharoff does not seem to have recovered too quickly from the first shock. Several sources tell us that he was the real and chief director of the provision of munitions for all the Entente armies. One of these adds that at that time an English warship was put at his disposal. It speaks also of the daring and cold-blooded frustration of German efforts to seize him at a certain château and later on a neutral ship—a temporary secretary was delivered over to a German submarine commander as "Sir Basil Zaharoff." There are many tales. They are true—possibly. But before things went so far, before this man of sixty-five got the length of setting to work again, of getting the reins into his hands, of becoming super-director and super-patriot of patriots, there was this transition period, the period when he looked like someone who has robbed someone, the period of bad conscience. And it is worth while examining that period if one wishes to get the psychological explanation of that completely new generosity without any *arrière-pensée* or intrigue which was then noticed in him.

Here is a story told by the witness D., the former Premier of Greece. Zaharoff, who during the war moved between Paris and London, went to Briand and talked to him about the organization of air warfare. He took his departure and at the door turned round suddenly—D. got the details from Briand himself—pulled a sealed envelope from his pocket, handed it to Briand without a word and ran from the room. In the envelope was a slip of paper marked "For soldiers' widows" with a cheque for a million francs. Briand called to him, wishing to thank him, but his visitor hurried on and did not come back.

There is something fateful in this meeting of his with Briand. The same M. Aristide Briand once again, after so many years, entangled the generous donor in the affairs of

Greece, the affairs of his homeland—and they ate at the money and nerves of Zaharoff until a considerable portion of what he had amassed in his long, wild life had been lost. But that happened long after this. At the moment we are only in 1915, still in the days of the war.

What was happening during the war in Mr. Zaharoff's homeland—that is, if we may consider Greece as his homeland? The political situation, so far as Eastern Europe was concerned, was just what we found it to be in 1821 and again in 1877; only the details differed—dates, names of battlefields, and generals. Once again Russia is setting free the Balkan peoples; the Balkan nation which is in the foreground is this time the Serb. Greece is Serbia's ally, but for good reasons remains neutral. There were two parties in the country. One was that of the king, a soldier king who loved the army and was a brother-in-law of Wilhelm II, still German enough not to want to fight against Germany, yet Greek enough not—as he declared to an interviewer—to want to fight at all, "because Greece can gain more if the end of the World War finds her with her army intact than if she had taken part in it." The other party was that of Venizelos, the friend of the Entente, a man of the people from the islands which have always remained democratic, anti-dynastic, Venizelist. The Serbs flourished the treaty of alliance; the Emperor Wilhelm telegraphed to his brother-in-law—his telegraphic methods are well known; the Entente and the Central Powers began to spur on their adherents a little. What did not happen officially happened semi-officially; what did not happen semi-officially happened with the aid of small organizations which had been allowed to grow here and there under the leadership of responsible or irresponsible persons. In addition there was a difference of opinion among the diplomatists of the Entente, and after a month or two things had proceeded so far that Athens had become the maddest and most active nest of intrigue and espionage that ever existed even under Balkan

conditions. Propaganda was a universal trade. It was soon said that the Germans had been able to obtain an inordinate influence over the masses which was exercised by a "devilishly cunning and mysterious" agent, Baron von Schenck by name, who, if you like to believe Mr. Compton Mackenzie, seems, despite his high reputation, to have been only a harmless and conceited ass.

But something had to be done. Greece had to be taught to what side she belonged. And in this connection we possess two documents. A little indiscretion; a secret despatch.

The Russian Minister in Athens, Prince Demidoff, to the Russian Foreign Minister Sazonoff.

TELEGRAM

No. 283.
Confidential.

Apart from the struggle with German agents by means of police supervision for which unusually large sums have been made available by our allies, certain steps have been taken by them with the aim of influencing public opinion through the Press. The fact, nevertheless, that it is questionable whether any real results will accrue from such measures induces me to state my opinion against the organization of the measures at present planned by us in Greece whose results will not be commensurate with the expense involved. Should, however, the Ministry for this or that reason consider it necessary that such measures should be taken, I add a rough estimate of what could be done: (1) a subsidy to two newspapers which are ready to serve our purposes—3,000 francs per month; (2) a subsidy to the telegraph agency in Athens which apparently is ready to include in its service news of the desired kind —5,000 francs per month; (3) the creation of an anonymous organization which, basing itself on telegraphed news from Russian and foreign papers and on information of a general character, would edit such material for reprint in the various local papers. These would contain news of the victories of the

Allies, of their power and their resources, and, further, would see that the general and current Balkan questions were treated in a way favourable to us. This would cost a sum of about 1,500 francs per month, while the payment to the various papers, among them some at present paid by the Germans, who say that they are ready to publish news of the kind mentioned at two or three francs per line, and further payment for individual editors and journalists who will use the material mentioned and will develop the leading ideas supplied to them—a sum of at least 12,000 francs per month. Apart from that there is the task of issuing popular pamphlets, which will cost about 200 francs per month. Including the supplementary work the newspaper budget will cost more than 20,000 francs per month.

DEMIDOFF.

And something was done. But not by Russia, where the Czar fully shared Prince Demidoff's pessimism. In Paris there was someone who made this his own business:

Demidoff to Sazonoff

TELEGRAM

No. 106.
Personal.

I have been told very confidentially by a reliable source that the French Government has put at Venizelos' disposal 2,000,000 francs for propaganda in the army.

DEMIDOFF.

And with these 2,000,000 francs we come again to Mr. Basil Zaharoff; to Mr. Zaharoff and M. Briand. But let us relate the story in the order of events.

About the end of 1915 M. Venizelos, who had been deposed from his premiership, toyed with the idea of deposing King Constantine in his turn and clearing him out of Greece. The Greek Minister in Paris, a certain M. Romanos, confided the scheme to M. Briand, then Foreign Minister, and asked to

be told how far France would go in the matter of expenses. M. Briand had loyalist scruples ; could he support a rebel against his lawful king ? That would be immoral. So he handed to M. Venizelos only 350,000 francs just as a mark of his sympathy. That was a mere drop in the bucket. But then there went to M. Briand a marvellous armaments gentleman and handed him an envelope containing a million francs. M. Briand made inquiries and found that the gentleman had also given 200,000 francs for a war hospital in Biarritz. And he had handed over the gold plate from his house in Paris to the Bank of France. Either this gentleman had something to conceal, or he was a great friend of the Allies—but in war-time it was as well not to push inquiries too far. And in any case the gentleman had too much money. And he was a Greek ! That was sufficient reason for Mr. Zaharoff at the turn of the year 1915–16 to be invited again to come and see M. Briand. One result of the visit was that Prince Demidoff could send home the telegram which we have just read. (In a despatch sent by Briand on August 8, 1916, to the French Minister in Athens, the despatch which was at the bottom of Demidoff's telegram, the name of the donor of the two millions is said to be given.) But nothing could be done with money alone. M. Briand had several times tried to establish a really good Entente propaganda service in Athens, but in this sort of activity the French were no more efficient than the English, who would not take the thing seriously. A journalist was needed, and one with money. To purchase newspapers ! To form public opinion ! Was there not a rumour that this generous Mr. Zaharoff had once had some experience of the game ?

And now let us get further information from an apologia written by the French journalist, Henri Turot, who later played some part in politics :

In the course of a mission to Greece with which I was entrusted by M. Briand I recognized the imperative necessity of putting an end to the situation in which we found ourselves

thanks to German propaganda. A counter-poison must be found at all costs. I besought M. Briand by wire and then personally to give us the necessary resources.

On one of my visits to Paris from Athens, Briand, through Painlevé, brought me into contact with Mr. Zaharoff, who had expressed his willingness to place part of his huge fortune at our disposal for the furtherance of our policy in the Balkans. I was able to convince Mr. Zaharoff that one of the most potent means of helping our propaganda in the Balkans, or rather of calling it into existence, was to found a Mediterranean news agency. Mr. Zaharoff had only one wish, and that was to present to his adopted country, France, a tool which would be fitted to supply a counter-weight in Greece to the infamous and demoralizing propaganda of the Wolff agency.

To realize this Mr. Zaharoff placed the necessary funds at my disposal and added words which could not fail to please me : "It is not my intention to create a wretched local agency, I shall extend your conception and give you the means to found an agency that will be world-wide in its influence." Thus thanks to the wide vision of Briand and the generous co-operation of Zaharoff the Agence Radio came into existence, and a few months later its success surpassed all our expectations.

Now all that about the ideal aims of the Agence Radio, financed on so lordly a scale by Mr. Zaharoff, is very French. Prince Demidoff expressed himself a little more bluntly when he reported thus to St. Petersburg on the new activity of French propaganda.

Papers have been acquired ; special editions subsidized, and a special French agency, the Radio, has been established. It issues bulletins which very one-sidedly contain news favourable to the interests of the Entente.

And the first trace of the activity of this new version of Zaharoff's "principle of incitement" which we find in the world press is this :

ATHENS. The Agence d'Athènes reports : The public prosecutor has ordered a judicial investigation in the case of the Agence Radio for spreading false news. All the papers, even the Venizelist organs *Patris*, *Hestia*, *Nea Hellas*, and *Ethnos*, furiously attack the Agence Radio and condemn its methods.

Thus the news factory of Mr. Zaharoff went a little too enthusiastically to work. The general indignation of the Press—"even of the Venizelist organs"—showed that nothing could be done simply by founding an agency. Newspapers must be secured which would accept the agency's service, and pass it on to their readers. If Athens really was "Paris in little" then the newspaper market in Athens could be captured by Parisian methods. And here let us quote Richard Lewinsohn, who is well-informed on this point :

The new foundation, the newspaper *Eleftheros Typos*, friendly to the Entente, was readily supported. But then when the paper *Embros* was about to be bought up the official organ of the Venizelos, the *Patris*, felt itself threatened by competition. The owners went off straight away to the French legation and threatened to go over to the Central Powers if a part of the money for propaganda didn't reach their pockets. As the *Patris* was a paper which was much quoted in Paris and London, the French legation could do nothing else than telegraph to Paris their view that the original Venizelist papers should also be subsidized to the tune of two to three hundred thousand francs. Nothing more then was heard of the purchase of the *Embros* and the storm was allayed. Some time later a new paper, the *Kirix*, took up the Entente propaganda and carried on the struggle against the neutrality policy of the Greek Government with extreme vigour.

Here once again we find the tracks of the man from Tatavla. It cannot be the task of this biography to set out in detail this long history. Mr. Zaharoff deluged Greece with false news ; the fleet which blockaded Piræus showed the Greeks Vickers' and Schneider–Creusot's guns, and an army of pro-

pagandists paid with Zaharoff's money, was let loose on Greece and had as task to convert those who could not be converted either by the reports of the Agence Radio or by the guns of the navies. This army, according to Lewinsohn, consisted, as the official list countersigned by the prefect of police of Athens stated, of one hundred and sixty persons, including

8 men suspected of murder
27 thieves
10 smugglers
21 professional gamblers
20 white slavers

The American Davenport said that he read a secret report sent by Henri Turot to the Quai d'Orsay which ran thus :

The recent demonstration in Athens did not cost us much . . . only 10,000 francs.

That went on for a year, and then it was seen that Briand had been fully justified in letting Mr. Zaharoff loose on his homeland. The concentrated attack produced results. King Constantine left the country. Venizelos came into power and then Greece entered the war on the side of the Entente. Mr. Zaharoff is once again a lauded patriot and might well be content with his work. Here there is no question of strategic hypotheses such as we considered in connection with the Gallipoli campaign ; here are facts. The entry of Greece into the war was one of the reasons for the collapse of the Bulgarian front, and the collapse of the Bulgarian front was one of the reasons for the great debacle of November 1918. Because his action in the homeland was so successful, because the diplomatists of the Central Powers in Athens received their passports, the man with the imperial was so relieved in his conscience and had so completely assumed control of the great transaction that it was to him that recourse was had when, during 1917,

a possibility of peace appeared on the horizon. According to one source it was on the occasion of President Wilson's offer to intervene with the Central Powers ; according to another, on the occasion of that famous Letter of the Emperor Karl to Prince Sixtus of Parma. The one source says that it was Lord Bertie who, in a sense, "approached" Mr. Zaharoff ; according to the other it was Sir William Tyrrell. The answer at least is certain. One of them entered in his diary :

Zaharoff is for the prosecution of the war to the bitter end.

And the first source adds :

When our sons rushed to death the call came not from King and country, but from the armaments manufacturer, Zaharoff.

"To the bitter end !" We know what the end was. We are in November 1918.

Is Basil Zaharoff a national hero or is he a "war criminal" ? The difference between these two conceptions in certain circumstances is very much of the same type as that between victors and vanquished. Most of the factories belonging to Mr. Basil Zaharoff were in the Entente countries, and so in the war he was on the side of the Allies. Thus in 1918 he is no criminal but a hero. On the other side of the front line there were soon to be criminal proceedings started against his business friends, Thyssen and Krupp, although, as we have seen, nothing happened to them. And we have also explained that Mr. Zaharoff recovered from his first horror and found himself possessed once again of a good conscience and playing the part of an uncrowned armaments king.

During the Great War he was actually the Minister of Munitions for all the Allies ; his power and his influence were so great that the Allied leaders were compelled to ask his

opinion before any great attack was undertaken ; his change of residence was kept secret and he went from port to port on a British torpedo-boat which had been placed specially at his disposal.

So the *Weekly Dispatch* says. Is that legend ? Or just a minor departure from strict accuracy ? But at least we can be sure that a new, a second, wave of generosity swept over this tough old man, this conquistador who would soon be seventy, and who now, at the end of the Great War, stood on a pinnacle of power such as even he had not dreamed of. But this time it is not the munificence of a man who is trying to establish a moral alibi. He is now a Maecenas and a patron of the fine arts and pure science. He establishes a chair of English literature in the Sorbonne in Paris ; it is called the Haig Chair. He founds a chair of French literature in Oxford ; it is called the Foch Chair—because after all he has moved in the cultivated circles of Paris diplomacy and is a citizen of the world. It is, if you like, a case of the application of the Zaharoffian principles of incitement and of arming both sides, but carried into the sphere of munificence. The *Temps* disclosed the fact that during the war the "great philanthropist," as from now on he is called, had devoted fully fifty million francs to the Allied cause. How much he got from the Allied cause is not reported. But he had delivered the goods ; now came the payment. Oxford took its friendly revenge and bestowed on him the honorary degree of doctor of laws. Of laws ! Upon Mr. Basil Zaharoff ! Paris could not let itself be shamed. Read in the *Journal Officiel* :

LEGION OF HONOUR. On the recommendation of the Foreign Minister. To be Grand Officer—M. Basil Zaharoff. Reasons : extraordinary service to the Allied cause.

Thereupon England entered into competition with its ally across the Channel and bestowed on the man who had per-

formed "extraordinary services" the Grand Cross of the Bath. Whereupon France overtrumped the ally across the Channel, and made him—after all, he was practically a Frenchman—Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, the greatest honour it can confer. Or is he really practically an Englishman ? It can at least be demonstrated that it was in England that for the first time he had to do with the authorities ! Accordingly the people in London could not let themselves be outdone by their friends across the Channel and conferred upon this gentleman who is practically an Englishman the Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire. There the competition ended. France made to that last honour no reply. For now peace had broken out. And the portrait of the national hero Zaharoff, after the enlarging process done by the Paris Press, began to show some flaws.

But at the moment let us stop at the first outbreak of peace and at the partitioning of the globe by the four men of Paris. Two of them, Lloyd George and Clemenceau, were Zaharoff's trusted friends, were of those who, during the last years of the war had been accustomed to inquire modestly after the opinion of this king without a crown, this minister of munitions without responsibility, whenever important decisions had to be taken. Had, then, the man with the imperial, whose fortune was then estimated by many at thirty million, and by some at a hundred million pounds sterling, and who was reckoned to be one of the richest and one of the most powerful men in the world, his fingers among the cards or the cards in his fingers ? We will take the trouble to investigate. At least one thing is obvious, and that is how Sir Basil Zaharoff has grown to be a symbol. He has become material for legend, for literature. And so we have reached the stage at which we can busy ourselves with the literary versions of his personality. This Basil Zaharoff from Mughla, Tatavla, Wilkomir, the Phanar, London, Paris, this "man of mystery," this "man behind the scenes," this "merchant of sudden death," this

"king of arms," this "great philanthropist"—how does he appear when his expensive limousine encounters one of those less comfortable cars in which writers have to travel?

There is first a scene from Emil Ludwig's play *Versailles*. Mr. Lloyd George is giving a party in his hotel in Paris. The room is full of celebrities:

SECRETARY. Mr. Nansen to see you. He asks you to excuse his clothes. He only arrived a few minutes ago.

L. G. Frithof Nansen! Here's a sensible man at last who understands nothing about politics.

(Nansen enters and shakes hands with Lloyd George and Balfour. Lloyd George offers him whisky. They sit by the fire.)

. . . *(falling in at once with the other's frankness)* Excellent! We've missed you here in this Zoo. What use can we be?

NANSEN *(simply)*. You can send us bread.

L. G. *(uneasily)*. What? Norway? But all these years you've been doing a gigantic deal in timber. Is there really any shortage with you?

NANSEN *(never sentimental, always manly, simple, and direct as his gaze)*. Bread for three hundred million starving Germans and Russians, Mr. Lloyd George.

(A long pause. From up-stage dance music softly played. Laughter and the clink of glasses.)

L. G. What do you suggest?

NANSEN. Raise the blockade.

L.G. Impossible till after peace has been signed.

NANSEN. Meanwhile fifty thousand children are dying of starvation over there.

L. G. *(violently)*. But until they've signed I could never put it across England.

(A group has formed not far from the table. In it is Zacharoff, the face of an old buccaneer with a grey beard and roving eye, and General Bliss. Others follow them and stand listening, a little apart, to what ensues.)

L. G. We're trying to find some method of feeding these starving German children.

ZACHAROFF (*always unmoved, lucid, he speaks in a slow, meditative voice*). I'll sign a cheque at once for a million.

NANSEN (*looks him straight in the eyes*). Who—is the signer ?

ZACHAROFF. Zacharoff. I think we've met.

NANSEN (*astonished but not taken aback*). I—don't seem to remember.

ZACHAROFF. You look surprised, Professor Nansen ?

BLISS. Well, I'll say this, Mr. Zacharoff, that's the good old American way of doing things. What a man has lifted off society he can always give back in his old age.

ZACHAROFF. I made it all honestly.

BLISS. Sure. By selling guns.

ZACHAROFF. Well, general, haven't you spent your life letting off the guns I sold ?

BLISS. Unluckily that was all they ever taught me. Besides, I took nothing but my wages.

ZACHAROFF. You think I made this offer to salve my conscience ?

NANSEN. I have no right to pry into the motives of a man who offers me a million for starving children.

ZACHAROFF. Well, but—ask me anything you like. Or do you disapprove of Hoover's Relief Campaign because the American farmers can't dispose of their huge surplus stocks now that peace has taken them by surprise ? I could wish all the kings and cabinet ministers who couldn't manage to avoid this war as quiet a conscience as mine.

L. G. Well, I don't fear the verdict of history—or the verdict of God Almighty either.

ZACHAROFF. And General Bliss ?

BLISS. At the moment of crisis I had only to carry out the orders of Congress.

ZACHAROFF. And I, for the last forty years, as representative of an international armaments concern, delivered arms in strict impartiality to any Power that cared to order them. Socialism, the Bourse, Science, and the Vatican, all failed you. Alone, above international strife, stood the international armament industry. Its justice was supreme and

even-handed, since the quality of the goods it delivered was equal for every combatant.

NANSEN. H'm! General absolution! Then why are three hundred million guiltless Germans and Russians starving to-day?

L. G. Guiltless? Didn't they choose their own Governments?

BALFOUR. I'm afraid that can't be argued in the case of the old absolute monarchies.

NANSEN. Monsieur Zacharoff, what led you to select your branch of industry?

ZACHAROFF. Chance—which, forty years ago, happened to set me down in a munition firm instead of in a chocolate factory.

NANSEN. So you didn't deliver your orders in the hope that there would be a war?

ZACHAROFF. On the contrary. Naturally our best business is done in peace-time. (*With conviction*) Then they all buy—to be prepared. In war-time every tintack factory makes munitions. Nobody, therefore, has greater interest than we in keeping the peace for ever and ever.

NANSEN. But—if statesmen, generals, and armament kings all wanted peace, why did we have any war?

ZACHAROFF. There you touch some old and primitive reasons. Shall we say—love of adventure? For instance, the young men of Europe who now lie rotting on the battlefields were thrilled by your Polar expedition. They all devoured your book. They welcomed their chance of showing that they, too, could risk their lives in any great cause—say the Fatherland. I believe that you, Professor Nansen, are the one man here to-night who has ever gone out to seek adventures—not urged by any business interest or moral or official obligation—merely because you had it in your blood.

NANSEN (*simply, without irony*). So that I must be the only really warlike person here—in all this League of Nation.

(*He rises, so do the others.*)

BLISS. If this League of Nations arms again to the teeth instead of getting down at once to disarmament it'll be a scandal and a laughing-stock.

NANSEN (*turning on him vehemently*). I find myself here between a general with a bristling moustache and four stars on his collar who preaches disarmament, and an armament king who promises me a million for starving children. I may count on your cheque ?

(*Movement through the room.*)

And now for the last act of the play. The scene is the park in Versailles immediately after the signing of the Peace Treaty.

(*From left enter Zacharoff with his secretary between two delegates.*)

1. DEL. But when ? *When* can you deliver ?

ZACHAROFF (*to secretary*). Do you think that in eight months from to-day we could deliver three hundred small calibre guns ? Let's say April 1st.

2. DEL. And our five thousand ?

ZACHAROFF (*dictates*). For Roumania three hundred small guns model B ; for Czechoslovakia five hundred model C. All for April 1, 1920. Confirmation to follow.

3. DEL. Found at last. They're all leaving Paris and I must see you. But—— (*glancing at the others.*)

2. DEL. (*smiling*). Oh don't let's intrude.

3. DEL. Lithuania must have flame-throwers. Have you ? Can you ? Forgive me but it's urgent. (*Resorts to gesture.*)

ZACHAROFF (*dictates*). Three thousand flame-throwers, German type. With the new American breech.

4. DEL. There's Zacharoff. We're in luck. No, no, we don't clash in the least. It's a matter of tanks. Without tanks Italy's done for. Our War Office representative would like to see you to-morrow. When can you deliver ? No, no, it's terribly urgent. Can't you understand ?

PADEREWSKI. My dear Zacharoff ! Big guns ! You smile ? I can't defend Poland simply with music. Big guns ! What type ? My War Minister will explain it all to you. You promise me as an old friend preferential treatment. Money ? Quite unimportant. But real 42's. The kind the Germans used to have. My *dear* friend !

5. DEL. Mr. Lloyd George has heard you're leaving Paris. He'll be much gratified if you could spend next week-end with him in Kent. He has a few details to discuss with you regarding the carrying out of the peace conditions.

(*They all surround him.*)

6. DEL. There he is ! We've looked everywhere for him. The hero of the day. Why, what an illustrious assembly ? Now then ! Gas ! What about poison gas ?

ALL. Of course, gas.

ZACHAROFF. Just send in your orders. They'll all be delivered.

1. DEL. But the German gas ? Where will we get it now ?

ZACHAROFF. We can offer you a most reliable substitute. I'm just on the point of founding an international trust——

2. DEL. To gas off Europe ?

ZACHAROFF (*serious*). Only to get the right formulæ.

SEVERAL DELS. And guns ? And flame-throwers ? And submarines ? But when ? Soon ! Soon ! It's so extremely urgent.

(*They throng round him.*)

ZACHAROFF. Well, at least give me till to-morrow. On so festive a day I feel I ought to take a little stroll. Listen to these planes humming away again and the sounds of guns again. It all makes me feel perfectly certain that the great peace is signed at last.

A fine, a grateful dramatic figure, this Mr. Zaharoff. Already he is a major source of worry to the writers of epics. As example I offer you the account of a meeting between Sir Basil and a less fortunate colleague, taken from the work of an author whom I hold in great esteem, to wit, a scene from the novel *Die Macht* by Robert Neumann :

You could have given me the room with the three windows overlooking the harbour instead of this hole ; it's a scandal and I want to see the manager. The next time I'll go to the Royal. No, that's not bluff ; one has to look after oneself.

Send up this card to Mr. G. in the prince's suite ; yes, to the King of Sweden. Cards cost nothing.

Son Altesse
PAUL DE ROY
Duc de l'Irac
Cousin du Roi d'Albanie

Yes, that hits you. But for just now keep my incognito, or if you must, lift the veil ever so little . . . And send these two cards to Sir Basil Zaharoff's palace. Sick, is he ? Not seeing anyone ? He'll see me, my dear sir, you can bet your boots on that. Wait ; instead of the card I'll send a *billet-doux*. Hand-made paper and the crown on it. And I'll say :

DEAR SIR BASIL,

I must speak to you at once on the matter of the commission for Albania which is long overdue. As a result of temporary embarrassments, I need the money most urgently——

No, that's not good enough. Better be quite blunt :

SIR BASIL, I am here and I must speak to you. In an hour I will——

No, again no. You're tired with your travelling ; take a cocktail. If you don't, you'll use up all the fine paper ; there's only eighteen sheets left. Got it in Stockholm—no, in Copenhagen ; Frau Graarud paid it then. What was she called —Hertha ? Helene ? But this letter. It runs now :

DEAR OLD FRIEND,

Here we are breathing Riviera air again. I've a château, old friend, quite close to your *bueno retiro*. I'm almost in love with it and its golf-links. I've bought a property in the south of England, but one has to have one's little log cabin on the Coté d'Azur. Only I could not settle down here without shaking you by the hand and hearing that I am not quite unwelcome to

you as a neighbour. The King of Sweden expects me to dinner. But I've a minute before I need go and I'd like to say "How d'you do" to you. Till then.

Yours ever,

DE ROY.

Right at last. Over it goes by liveried messenger. And the wicked old devil, this wreck of a rotten Greek bandit, whom they managed just not to pinch, this beast of a Zaharoff has the guts to get impudent and write back :

DEAR DE ROY,

My valet has a peculiar habit ; he throws out uninvited guests. And in a day or two I shall be eighty-two and am too old to train him better. Isn't it a pity ? But the enclosed note for a thousand francs will be enough not only to pay your hotel bill, but to get you back to Salonica or Cairo. There you'll be safe from the police. Safe journey.

SIR B. Z.

I was right ; a bandit. I must have five minutes to cool down. Then the cooling down process was over and the next thing was to get even with the Greek pig. Then—but let's take things as they came.

At 1.15 I was still sitting at lunch. It was then that that letter came. The *maître d'hôtel* himself brought it into the restaurant ; he had read the address of the sender and stood stiffly to attention until I opened it and glanced at it : "Aha, from my friend Zaha—" I let that much out and then was discreetly silent. Then I collected myself, and said, "Go over to Sir Basil's. Say that I'm most awfully sorry, but at the moment I'm at lunch and that I'm going to have a nap afterwards. I don't know if I'll be able to receive visitors to-day. He'll understand. Will you do that ? Good ! Well, what are you waiting for?" There he stood and stared at the thousand-franc note which had slipped out of the envelope on to the cloth and which he can't fathom at all. But I pulled myself together quickly. I laughed lightly and said : "Aha—splendid. Here's a thousand chervonetzes. Send them over to Sir

Basil and tell him that his credit's good enough for me for that sum—of course it is—and tell him that it's a pleasure. He shouldn't have sent me this first thousand-franc note as cover, the old stupid. Cover indeed ! He has forgotten to add two noughts. That's a hundred thousand, a hundred thousand francs. He's ageing, is the good Sir Basil." Off goes the *maître d'hôtel.* He bows seven times and almost falls over himself in his hurry. They really shouldn't appoint young men to such responsible jobs.

Then a couple of chervonetzes—but never mind that. What's the use of having a new business connection with this—what's he called ? Gutjahr. A million seven hundred thousand lies in his safe ; I'd like to take away a hundred thousand in my pocket-book. Perhaps I can give this fellow something, once I get the notes changed. Good ! I'll deal in the hall with the motor salesman. Then his letter arrives :

DEAR M. DE ROY,

A letter from you must have gone amissing and I suppose that your payment in chervonetzes is connected with one of those deliveries to Russia arranged at the time. I ask you therefore to come and see me at once. I am in the office of the Casino. Come and fetch me there so that we shall lose no time.

Always yours,
SIR BASIL.

Ha ! ha ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! I jump into my touring car. I let him wait, the old bandit. I drive along quite slowly. . . .

But that is enough. We have no time for M. Paul de Roy's conjuring tricks, and I think we have heard enough of his monologue. The interview between M. de Roy, cousin of the King of Albania, and Sir Basil Zaharoff went like this. They met and strolled slowly along the Casino promenade, both of them in morning-coats and top-hats. They were of the same height, both white-haired, strong-muscled, sunburnt. You might easily have taken them for brothers, as, having greeted each other, they strolled along in that idle, aristocratic

way, like monarchs talking familiarly. Sir Basil had sent home his negro servant and his doctor so that he could confer confidentially with his dear de Roy. With a little intimate gesture he had put his hand inside the arm of the younger man, the youngster. For that eighty-two of his was not quite accurate—the real truth was something so pleasant that it was not to be uttered in everyday conversation; besides, he liked to play the invalid, remembering old huckster days in Asia Minor. He is seventy-six and not more than half blind yet. On that point let neither man nor God be mistaken.

Then this conversation follows. M. de Roy bursts out: "So they said to me, M. de Roy, they said to me, the new machine factory in Stalingrad has been officially working for thirteen weeks; officially, according to the Five-Year Plan, it is putting out eight machine-guns a day, but actually it hasn't really put out one finished gun because the American four-millimetre fraising machine hasn't arrived yet. And there is to be a parade on the Red Square on October 1. They must have two thousand machine-guns. So go to Germany, M. de Roy, or go where you like, and buy where you like and as dear as you like, but buy anyway, M. de Roy, and help us out of a hole. We haven't any dollars at the moment, but here's two million chervonetzes for you." On the heavy side, thinks M. de Roy, while he says all this in his easy way, on the heavy side, but the old lad's biting. Three, four, five years ago, you couldn't have handled him this way. And he ends up: "So here I am with my chervonetzes, and if you are very cheap, dear Sir Basil—well, it isn't the first time we have done business together." On the heavy side, thinks Sir Basil; he is just a fool. I've despised him for five and twenty years because he is just a fool. Now it's obvious to anyone. Scarcely sixty and he's gone ga-ga. But it's no business of mine for whom he buys machine-guns. Money's money, and he's really got Russian money. Money's money, and perhaps I could put over on him those 1870 needle guns which the Macedonians rejected, but which are still good enough for Central Asia. Now he bows with senile affability to a lady, then he hums a bar or two of the slow fox-trot which the band on the lower terrace is

playing, and then at last he recollects himself and says : "Oh, yes, these Russians. Ha ! ha ! Whom are they going to fight now ?" All that M. de Roy thinks is—idiot. That means—and then he thinks—idiot and I'll pay you with my almost genuine chervonetzes and I'll send them marked "corned beef" to my friend Feisal. He pays in gold, you fool, and so is doubly deserving. There you go in your fat, you haven't let me get fat in the twenty-five years of our acquaintance. But now there is such a thing as justice in the world, now you're nothing but an idiot ; we're not so far off the day when whisky will taste like petrol.

Then Sir Basil leans still more senilely on his other arm and says casually : "That graceful little thing over there. I've a weakness for red hair. Red-haired women have such a wonderful skin when they're very young. She's looked over ; she's taken a notion of you. I have still a hundred thousand rifles. They're not just the latest type ; they're needle guns. But what of it. They're sound and solid ; they'll last. I'm too old now for business. I remember now, my grandnephew has brought an action to declare me incapable of managing my own affairs ; the hearing's on the twelfth. But till then I'm my own master. I'll sell you the rifles at two pounds apiece." That, too, thinks Sir Basil, is a bit on the heavy side, but for all his upright carriage the fellow's quite ga-ga. Two, three years ago you couldn't have put it across him like this. And he stands still for a moment and breathes in the air, the tang of that warm, salty sea air filled with perfumes, petrol and the scent of summer flowers, and says dreamily like a man remembering the past, "Ah, this air !"

Then just then at the very same moment an alarm bell rings in the mind of each of them. It is always a mistake to underestimate your partner ; better remember one is a man of the world and tighten the reins a little. M. de Roy says : "Aye, that air ! *Le célèbre atmosphère de la Mediterranée.* The needle-guns are a job lot. It was you that dainty little thing looked at, my dear Sir Basil. No false modesty, now. These red-haired women ! But when they are thirteen they get hairs on their bodies and at sixteen their bloom is over. There is

something doing in Thrace and Albania which you should—But to whom am I telling this? *A propos* Albania. Did you know that I have still to get my commission for the last order for gas shells? Ten thousand two hundred dollars in all. The little woman anyway doesn't come from the East; she's probably from the States; she puts on a tweed costume in the afternoon." Sir Basil acknowledges with pleased deliberation the salutes of two gentlemen and answers lightly: "Ah, those tweed outfits. Frenchwomen and cocottes wear silk in the afternoon. Do you really think it was me she looked at? I can't consider the matter of the Albanian commission; the order was never completed. I like to play the Prince of Wales here a bit, you know, and create Riviera fashions. Yesterday at half-past four I put on a dinner jacket with a black tie, and, of course, dress shoes, but with a white waistcoat and white flannel trousers. It looked fine. What do you think?"

But what M. Paul de Roy, Duke of Iraq and cousin of the King of Albania, had to say to this genial extravagance of the powerful old gentleman was never uttered. For in M. de Roy's brain a second alarm bell went. He's making game of me, he thought bitterly. And now he changes ever so little the pleasant conversational tone he has used up to now; a sudden touch of hardness creeps into his voice, when, brushing aside the man-of-the-world question of his partner, he says shortly: "You'll pay that Albanian commission. The thing was quite in order. Whether you carried it out or not doesn't matter a tinker's curse to me." And at a stroke—the genially thrown ball of small talk is not taken up again; it rolls away unheeded. He is now the commercial traveller, de Roy, born in 1866 in Newhampton in the State of Virginia, a man to be treated with respect. Eleven warrants, each one more undeserved than the other, are out against him in all the corners and ends of the earth; more money has passed through his tobacco-yellowed fingers than through those of a bank cashier; in Vienna they impounded his trunk and his car; he has in his bag one hundred and thirty-four contracts; contracts for future delivery, contracts for loans, contracts

with States, contracts for land development, mining rights contracts, appointment contracts—one hundred and thirty-four of them, and of these one hundred and eight may be all bluff and thin air, but the others are worth millions. And there is Sir Basil Zaharoff. Possibly he is a little older. But he doesn't come from the States, but from a tiny place in Asia Minor, and the fifty-and-one warrants which, in the course of his long and rich life, have been sworn out against him in all the corners and ends of the earth, these—for money has remained sticking to these tobacco-yellowed fingers of his ; he is a child of fortune—these he has long ago got quashed. His bag and his car have not been pledged ; he is a pillar of the State. No one gets round him. As they stand there in their morning-coats and top-hats, the same height, the same grey hairs, the same strong muscles, the same sunburn, they might be taken for brothers. Only their bodies—aye, beneath that curious covering of cloth and linen their bodies, the bodies of old men, of old clothes-dealers, withered bodies which cling stubbornly to life, come forth victoriously like animals and leap to the battle.

"You," said that body which in official documents is differentiated from other bodies by the name of de Roy—it is as good as any other—"you," it said, no longer troubling to be soft-voiced, "you will pay me my Albanian commission. If you don't—in '16 you told Lloyd's that a cargo of fuses for Belgian shrapnel had been sunk ; the insurance company paid up and actually you sent the fuses through Denmark into Germany." But the body which is differentiated from the other by the registered name of Zaharoff does not yield. In spite of the fact that it is hindered by an intricately woven shirt and what is called a morning-coat, it waves its arm in a gesture reminiscent of the orators of old Greece or of a Levantine carter in the fishmarket and vents its spleen. " Sent them to Germany, did I ? Ha ! ha ! Three hundred and sixty-four thousand pounds I made on that. And I didn't need to forge Albanian orders for gas shells. Farewell ! *Fare* well ! And the little red-haired woman smiles to me when I cross the promenade."

But M. de Roy has his reply. He can state that the Albanian orders were not forged, but a rogue always thinks that everybody else is a rogue, and, as for faring well, that's a relative term and for his part he finds that his dear Sir Basil is not very far from going completely ga-ga, and if you want proof, you've only to remember that he thought that that red-haired young female actually smiled at an old wreck of a Greek and not at him, M. de Roy. Ah, M. de Roy didn't say all that in such words, so we won't make a long tale of it. Finally for the fourth time, and, as he declared with horrid oaths, for the last time, he demanded his Albanian commission or he wouldn't answer for the catastrophic consequences. Mr. Zaharoff refused him in a long explanation in a high voice in which he drew not so stupid a deduction from de Roy's need of money regarding the real value of his chervonetzes. And then M. de Roy thought it time to put an end to a vain interview, and as, besides, their argument had gone on before the doors of the Casino to the increasing interest of passers-by, the duel came to a sudden end on the part of the one who decided to cry *finis*. Once again they became the soft-spoken aristocrats with their morning-coats and top-hats and their bodies, suddenly disappearing from view, atoned for their intemperance in silence, solitude, and darkness. They parted a little coldly, but they did not omit to shake hands. M. de Roy's little game had failed.

IV

THE VOICE BEHIND THE THRONE

> The Government of your country ! *I* am the Government of your country, I and Lazarus. Do you suppose that you and half a dozen amateurs like you, sitting in a row in that foolish gabble-shop, govern Undershaft and Lazarus ? No, my friend, you will do what pays us. You will make war when it suits us and keep peace when it doesn't. . . . When I want anything to keep my dividends up, you will discover that my want is a national need. When other people want something to keep my dividends down, you will call out the police and military. And in return you shall have the support of my newspapers and the delight of imagining that you are a great statesman.—Undershaft, the armament maker, in Shaw's *Major Barbara.*

We are still in November 1918. Our hero is now seventy. He is almost a mythological figure, a subject for authors—good grounds for thinking that this career of a meteor is nearing its end.

Nothing of the sort. At a time of life which to others would be the evening of their days, the unbroken strength of purpose of this greybeard concentrates on its master-stroke, on an enterprise of such monstrous compass that the biographer, as a student of crime, who has now to walk laboriously through tracts hitherto untrod, can hardly believe his own eyes, did not circumstance follow circumstance with deadly logic. We come now to Basil Zaharoff's emulation of Alexander's expedition, to the greatest raid which world history knows. No, not knows, now learns of. The actors : England, France, Greece, Turkey, Germany, Irak, the Wahabites, Kurdistan, the United States, the Druses, and the League of

Nations. And Mr. Zaharoff. If what in the earlier chapters we have been compelled to tell of Zaharoff is fiction, invention, fable, the truth which we are now going to learn is even more fabulous.

It is a tale of oil. We have to begin by going far back into the past and to quite another quarter of the globe.

Somewhere about 1600, Indians showed a French Franciscan missionary a black pond with a thick, unpleasant-smelling, and marvellous water. This marvellous water was used for medicine; then it was discovered that it was inflammable, and it was occasionally used for lighting. Then Mr. Rockefeller in Cleveland took a hand and made an industry out of it. When the industry grew so much as to become an exporting industry, people began to turn their attention to this powerfully smelling product of the earth in other places. Among those who sought for the new fashionable product—it was beginning to be realized that the future would belong to him who could control it—were two men of the true conquistador type, William Knox d'Arcy, an Anglo-Australian, and Colby M. Chester. This Mr. Chester was by profession an American rear-admiral, and had been sent to Turkey in 1899 with an American squadron to demonstrate against the massacres of the Armenians. The success of the demonstration is doubtful. But what is certain is that he must have smelled oil. Should we mention that a part of the Armenian nation, to their good fortune or ill, was settled on land under which oil was hidden? Mr. Chester, then, smelled this oil. He hurried home; he resigned his post; he returned again to the Supreme Porte and demanded a concession for the construction of a railway and the oil and mineral rights in Anatolia, Irak, and Mesopotamia.

Meantime, Mr. d'Arcy, the second of the two conquistadores, had gone to Persia, and in 1901 had obtained from the Shah a monopoly for sixty years for the exploitation of five-sixths of the oil fields in Persian territory. For that he paid

20,000 dollars and promised a further 20,000 and a small share in the net profits. Then he went to London, founded a company for the exploitation of the concession obtained in so praiseworthy a manner—later that company was not unknown to fame under the name of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company—and went back to the East to see if there were any more chances of doing business. His travels took him to Constantinople. But in Constantinople our ex-admiral Mr. Chester had established himself and was still negotiating with Abdul Hamid. He had cut down his demands a little. The concessions which he asked now did not embrace the whole of Anatolia, Irak, and Mesopotamia, but were confined to two modest vilayets, but vilayets obviously and literally stinking with oil, the vilayets of Bagdad and Mosul. But even these modest wishes were met by that excellent business man, the sultan, with true Eastern coolness, and he kept the American waiting so long with promises that Mr. d'Arcy had time to arrive in Constantinople on his return journey from London, hear of Mr. Chester's efforts, and at once declare that he, too, was a bidder for the Mosul concession.

Whereupon the Deutsche Bank put in an appearance and announced that it was going to make a third in the competition.

Whereupon that pious and excellent business man, Abdul Hamid, took this decision : First of all he transferred the vilayets of Bagdad and Mosul from the Turkish state to his own private estate. (The Armenians who were permanently settled there were, for religious and nationalist reasons, partly driven from the land, partly massacred by the Kurds and Turks who were still more permanently settled.) Then to Mr. Chester the sultan gave—nothing. Then he sold the concession to the Germans—this was that Anatolian railway concession of 1904, with the rights of boring and exploitation for Bagdad and Mosul which later became famous. Thereupon he got ready to sell this same concession a second time to

Mr. d'Arcy and the Anglo-Persian Company so that they would not feel themselves slighted. Unfortunately a slight accident happened to the Sultan Abdul Hamid; the Young Turk revolution broke out and he was overthrown.

That gave Mr. Chester, who had gone away empty-handed, a chance. And there are people who say that Abdul Hamid never would have been overthrown if Mr. Chester had not been refused the concession. Even this time, however, Mr. Chester did not get a formal concession. But at least he got the written promise that he would get a concession. There never was any question of ratifying this Chester concession, simply because under pressure of a common peril the English and the Germans hastened to join forces. Together they founded—we are now in 1912—the Turkish Petroleum Company, and compelled the Young Turks to recognize in favour of the new company all the rights over which Abdul Hamid had haggled ten years earlier. It was all settled by 1914—and that was the last joint diplomatic effort on the part of Britain and Germany for some time. Once again the American Chester had lost the trick. But between the new partners there was soon a slight rift. The English tried to force the Germans out of the company and the Germans the English. That rift, that rivalry, and some others of the same kind were very shortly afterwards carried on by other means. Those means are known as the World War.

Now it had broken out and things became slightly confused. The British attack on the Dardanelles thus takes on a new aspect. As that attack was beaten back by the excellent guns of Mr. Zaharoff, the second attack came from the south in the direction of Mosul itself. But the Germans realized the real issues at stake in the war; the Mesopotamian enterprise of the Anglo-Indian expeditionary force was parried, and the result was the catastrophe of General Townshend. You may read the details in the *Memoirs* of Lloyd George. For the present, however, let us examine dates a little more closely. The capture

of General Townshend and his men in Kut-el-Amara happened on April 28, 1916, and on May 16th, that is, just a little more than a fortnight after, Sir Mark Sykes, who went out as the plenipotentiary of Sir Edward Grey, concluded with M. Georges Picot, the authorized envoy of M. Paul Cambon, an agreement which laid down, first, that the French were to be represented alongside the British on the war fronts in the East, and, second, that the British would support French claims to Syria and Mosul.

What were Britain's reasons for concluding the "Sykes–Picot Agreement" ? One view is that Britain, which did not want to have any common frontiers with Russia, by this agreement simply pushed the French between them. Others say that all this happened during the days of the German attack on Verdun, and that the people in London wanted to encourage the French, who were not very far from collapse, by dangling the golden fruits of the East under their noses. And there is a third view which believes that the concessions to the French were made simply because General Townshend had just capitulated and that it was an easy matter for Britain to renounce something which it did not possess. Whatever the reasons may have been the Sykes–Picot treaty was concluded, and apart from the fact that by it they were dividing the skin of a bear which was very far from being dead, there were one or two flaws in it.

The British, in May 1916, had presented to the French Mosul, which they did not possess, but in October 1915 they had presented this same Mosul by another secret treaty to the Arabs. Here we come to the Pan-Arab nationalist "shereefian movement" started by Col. Lawrence, the rebellion of the Arabs who had ceased to be nomadic against the Turks. The leader of this movement was the Grand Shereef Hussein of Mecca. With him, then, Sir Arthur Henry Macmahon, a "Shell" man, concluded an agreement in October 1915, by which the Arab lands were to form an "independent league

of states in alliance with Britain." Hussein was to receive a kingdom of the Hedjaz and become Caliph, and his four sons were to receive the other Arab states including the area which, six months later, was promised to the French. When we remember the promises also made to the Jews which were certainly not in accord with the Pan-Arab agreement it will be clearly seen that Britain's chief anxiety was to win the war; after that—well, one could always negotiate.

Where are we now? In May 1916. In 1917 the British again advanced towards Mosul, but this advance, too, failed to attain its objective. Then there came revolution up in the north-east; the Russian ally dropped out and other cares took up all their attention. And so it came about that Mosul was not occupied by the British until 1918, after the collapse of the Central Powers. Thus we have followed the threads as they were spun to that November of 1918 when in Paris the task of redividing up the globe was taken in hand.

But there is one short thread which we have still to follow. Here we come to France itself and its situation with regard to oil policy. Before 1914 the French market was held by the Anglo-Dutch Royal Dutch Shell, and its chief, Henri Deterding, a gentleman who was recommended to the British Government by Lord Fisher as "a Napoleon in daring and a Cromwell in thoroughness." It was only during the war that the French realized that oil is necessary if a country is to be a world Power—during the war, when aeroplanes hummed up above, when the last French reserves were hurried up to the line in the commandeered taxis of Paris, when the tanks began to decide battles. "Motorization of the army" was the new slogan, and it was just then that France was left in the lurch by her former purveyors. All the oil that Shell could obtain during the war years had been taken over by Britain for her navy and her army. The Anglo-Dutch company became steadily transformed more and more into a purely English company. Mr. Deterding became a Knight of the

British Empire, and was celebrated by the former head of the British Press department in his book called *The Shell that hit Germany Hardest*. There it is again—a national hero. Meantime the French market had been captured by the great American competitor, Mr. Rockefeller's Standard Oil. And thus we come once again to that November of 1918 and are now able to survey the situation so that we may understand what follows.

What did follow was the intervention of Basil Zaharoff in the Anglo-French war. After fruitful diplomatic preparation it broke out in November 1918 at the Paris Conference, and it ended on March 15, 1925, with the Peace of Mosul. It is the British political tradition to clip the wings of the strongest Power on the Continent. The strongest Power on the Continent was Germany ; so in 1914 Britain had to go to war with her, to a little war in the boardroom of the Turkish Petroleum Company, and in one or two other boardrooms ; then this little war was extended a little and is known as the World War. But in November 1918 France was the strongest Power on the Continent so, as far as British policy was concerned, it automatically took the place which Germany had once held, and the war-aim of Britain in the Anglo-French war which now broke out, though not in a military form, was—the crippling, or at least the checking, of France's power. The nearest way, the easiest, and the " most peaceful" way was that which led over oil. France possessed no oil, and without oil, if one had learned the lesson of the World War, a Great Power is not a Great Power. Thus sheer necessity made the Anglo-French war an oil war. It had a foreign front—Mosul. And the struggle of the French for this source of supply, the only one which, as a result of the repartitioning of the world, was practically accessible, now takes on its true aspect, and reveals itself to be a life and death struggle. But in this war there was a home front, too ; it was carried on in France itself, and the

British aim was to win back the internal French market which had been lost during the World War by the sudden discovery on the part of Mr. Deterding that he was an English patriot. There could be no question of Englishmen, even suddenly discovered Englishmen like Mr. Deterding, taking the lead in the fight in a France where national feeling was aroused, and which had become profoundly distrustful of the ally on the other side of the Channel. But there was a Frenchman. The founder of a home for French seamen, the donor of university chairs, the proprietor of newspapers, the wearer of a high order of the Legion of Honour—in short, Mr. Basil Zaharoff. And thus it came about that the gentleman with the imperial whom we had thought ripe for retirement, intervened in the Anglo-French war at the age of seventy.

If there is anyone who is surprised that the part he played in this war is contested and, for the most part, until these lines were published, remained wrapped in obscurity, he has either not read this biography or has failed to understand it. Zaharoff's position and his motives are debatable. Was he director-in-chief? Was he only a business man without interest in politics who tried to get hold of a line which so far he had neglected? Did he, perhaps, act as an English patriot? Or was he directed rather than director? Was he the mouthpiece of British policy, the agent of that fabulous intelligence service of whose comprehensive activities the French are so ready to supply us with abundant evidence? We have no opinion; we shall just chronicle events, after having begged for the sympathy of the reader. The jungle through which we shall try to trace Sir Basil Zaharoff's tracks in the next few years is actually one of the most tangled and confused to be found in the whole range of political and economic history, and where by pure chance some light gets into it or a prospect opens up, what is revealed is so extraordinary that it is difficult not to believe that one's eyes are deceiving one.

Just as in 1914 Mr. Basil Zaharoff had proved his strategic

insight by beginning to buy up armament shares weeks and months before the outbreak of the World War, so now, it seems, he had scented even before the collapse of the Germans, the outbreak of the Anglo-French war. The resolve to make a campaign in France must actually have been taken in the early summer of 1918. It began—as every action of Mr. Zaharoff in France begins—with his founding a chair, the Chair of English Literature in the Sorbonne, and with his promotion in the Legion of Honour. He became Grand Officer in June 1918. Here we may see that "second intention" which is as much an accompaniment of all the Zaharoff actions as is the signature of the artist is of a painting. And now Mr. Zaharoff occupied his strategic position as early as the summer of 1918, that is to say, as far as the Anglo-French war is concerned, in the very heyday of peace. For his financial offensive he deployed in three columns. We must study closely the direction of deployment, for on the understanding of that depends the understanding of all that follows.

Column 1, then. Let us recollect the duel which Zaharoff fought with the Schneider company in Russia, and in the course of which he suddenly, and to the painful discomfiture of his opponent, appeared as a partner in Le Creusot. Tactically we may put it thus : when Zaharoff wants to drive an opponent from a foreign field, he first of all establishes himself at enemy headquarters. This time the opponent was not Schneider, but France. The law of Germinal of the Year Nine lays down in its fourteenth article that

no one may be a member of the general assembly of the Bank of France who does not enjoy the rights of French citizenship.

Now let us go to the Chamber of Deputies and look in at the session of July 26, 1918. An annoying questioner, Jean Bon by name ; a Finance Minister, Klotz by name, and this dialogue :

BON. Take the list of the two hundred chief shareholders who

take part in the General Assembly. Will you look at the name that comes last in the list. It is Zaharoff!

KLOTZ. M. Zaharoff is a Frenchman.

BON. He is not a Frenchman. On July 12, 1918, on the recommendation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs he received a decoration as "member of the Board of Directors of the firm of Vickers–Maxim and a great friend of France." Next day the *Temps*, too, wrote that M. Zaharoff was certainly a great friend of France, but that he was no Frenchman.

KLOTZ. Newspapers can make a mistake.

BON. Can you give me the date when M. Zaharoff was naturalized?

KLOTZ. I haven't it with me. But the Chamber no doubt will believe me when I assure it that M. Zaharoff is a Frenchman and has performed most important services to France and her Allies.

Complimentary, very complimentary to our hero. And M. Jean Bon spoke merely out of patriotic excitement and without any ulterior motive. For the moment we may only note that Mr. Zaharoff succeeded in his manœuvre. That the information supplied by the Finance Minister was later shown to be false, that could not alter the facts of the situation. Not only did Mr. Zaharoff sit in the Bank of France; Mr. Zaharoff was a Frenchman. And now he could let his second column advance.

Only he did not need to make it march, for all unnoticed it had already reached its objective, and was there digging itself in. This is where we come to the position of Mr. Zaharoff on the Banque de l'Union parisienne, that bank belonging to the French heavy industry behind which he concealed himself before the war in order to take Le Creusot by surprise. Now, when he had consolidated his position in Le Creusot and as a result of close co-operation during the World War had become a very intimate partner of M. Schneider, he reversed the process, and as this Banque de l'Union parisienne had, in the meantime, developed into one of the two most powerful

of the big banks of France—but let us this time read what the Germans have to say. In a series of books issued by the School of Politics in Berlin there is an elaborate investigation—*Oelpolitik und angelsaechsischer Imperialismus*—by Karl Hoffman which can be most useful if the reader uses it with a little caution. The author, whose method is thoroughly scientific, is here and there afflicted with persecution mania. In this oil war the Germans had persecution mania, the French had it, and even the Americans. Only the British kept their nerve. And, of course, Basil Zaharoff. Herr Hoffman, who is deeply versed in his subject, writes :

The measures taken in Paris by the Shell group in the days after the war were taken in concert with the Banque de l'Union parisienne. This, since the war days, was under the influence mainly of Sir Basil Zaharoff, a Greek by birth, who in the gay world of Paris was the representative and incarnation of the British oil and industrial interests, e.g. the Vickers–Armstrong company. Here he appeared as a "French banker." Only later did the public in Paris realize that he was one of the most powerful inspirers of British policy.

You can see, Herr Hoffmann is well informed. It is important for us to remember one piece of information which he supplies, that Mr. Zaharoff "appeared as a French banker." Here we see the third column advancing.

Column I, the position in the Bank of France, was evidently much too official, and—as can be seen from the questions put by M. Jean Bon—much too much in the limelight to be used profitably for the business of everyday life. Column II, the position in the Banque de l'Union parisienne, was a little more elastic, but all Mr. Zaharoff's business could not suitably be done through a big bank in which he had as partners Messrs. Schneider and the whole of the French heavy industry. So Column III had to march to a special objective for his own private ends. A private bank. The private bank over which Mr. Zaharoff got control was called "Mayer frères" ; he trans-

formed it and called it the "Banque de la Seine," and we have to mention his henchmen and his satellites who appear in the list of founders, so as to recognize them when we meet them again. Here we find Mr. Francis Barker. We know him; he is the gentleman who issued that defiant declaration in connection with the *Echo de Paris* incident in 1914 to the effect that Vickers had nothing to do with Putiloff and knew of Krupp only from hearsay. Then there is Mr. L. H. G. Walford, who is married to one of the daughters of the Duchess of Villafranca, those daughters whom Mr. Zaharoff has made his heirs. And then there is a M. Nicolas Piétri and a M. Léon Pissard who are quite worthy of our attention; both have a trick of bobbing up on boards of directors wherever Mr. Zaharoff has a hand in the game. Other partners who have small shares are two private banks, Banque Thalman and the bank of that Mavrogordato family which has many business interests in common with Zaharoff and one member living in London as an ever-popular Pacifist and keen writer of letters to editors. But there is no need to burden memory further. In the course of 1918 Mr. Basil Zaharoff in peace-time deployed in France, flamboyantly and openly in the Bank of France, as a big bank personality in the Banque de l'Union parisienne, and privately in Mayer frères, which he calls the Banque de la Seine. The position is consolidated, and he can now advance from it.

The situation in France, meantime, became ripe for the first attack. Take one sentence from a memorandum addressed by M. Henry Bérenger to the French Government:

Whoever controls oil will control the world, for he will rule the seas with heavy oil, the air with refined oil, and the land with petrol and light oil. In addition, he will economically control his fellow-men because of the fantastic wealth which he can win from oil, that wonderful substance which the earth gives, which is so sought after to-day, and which is more valuable even than gold.

So merchants turn poets. That transformation is in world history one of the surest signs of a coming war.

We shall have failed to appreciate the state of nerves of the *grande nation* if we feel surprise that, as a result of this watchman's cry of M. Bérenger, a cry of alarm went through France. A cry once again for a national industry. Oil for France ! France for the French ! Now in the creation of national industries Mr. Zaharoff is an expert. In fact, it was he who invented "national industries." His columns are deployed. Now at the first shot they go into action.

It is, first of all, only a manœuvre of appeasement whose course we can trace, undertaken with the purpose of putting the Frenchness of Mr. Zaharoff beyond doubt. In the spring of 1918 he had founded the chair in the Sorbonne, and for that, thanks to M. Clemenceau, had been made Grand Officer of the Legion in June 1918, and, as early as July 1918, sat as a "Frenchman" in the Bank of France. Now the oil shot rang out and shocked the national sentiment. On that Sir Basil required as rapidly as possible to have his Frenchness refurbished. So in July 1919 there followed the promotion of Sir Basil to the Grand Cross, the highest honour which France can give. It worked splendidly. But the manœuvre developed further. M. Clemenceau had given his authority as Prime Minister to this last promotion, and as he had shown himself obliging in other respects in the preceding year—in the matter of a secret treaty which concerned the principality of Monaco, of which we shall possibly hear more later—one naturally had to be obliging to him in one's turn. To which we must add that there were still people in France who suspected an *administrateur délegué de la société Vickers* in days when once again there was a cry for a national industry. Something had to happen—and it did happen. Next month, in August 1919, Mr. Zaharoff made a wholesale settlement of all his accounts. He founded a company called "Vickers française." It had no actual business function to fulfil, as may

be seen from the fact that it renounced the manufacture of munitions so as not to annoy the friend in Le Creusot. But, in the first place, the name Vickers became de-Anglified in French ears ; in the second place, there was now a "national industry" in France, and, in the third place, the new foundation gave him a chance to return a favour. As Menevée says :

In interested circles it is positively declared that M. Michel Clemenceau, a relation of M. Georges Clemenceau, is a member of the Board of Directors of Vickers française.

This allegation of Menevée was indignantly denied. The denial held good for fifteen years, until a few months ago, when the Commission of the United States Senate encountered this M. Michel Clemenceau—as the representative in South America of Mr. Zaharoff.

No commentary is needed. It is a typical Zaharoff transaction with many facets.

But in dealing with this "action of incitement" on the part of Mr. Zaharoff, we must not lose sight of the great strategic lines of advance. Once again and in the old logical sequence we come to the conquest of France by the way of oil. When Mr. Zaharoff acted as a Frenchman, when he founded a Vickers française and took under his wing the Clemenceau family, he had not only defensive but also offensive intentions. He was on the point of carrying out a daring *coup*. Suddenly there arose a danger that France might yet escape and, apart from the Anglo-Saxon world-ruler, apart from Mosul, apart from any possible discovery on her own territory, make herself independent. New oil fields were discovered in French Algeria. If these were productive, if they were exploited, then the British had lost the Anglo-French war even before the rival armies had come to battle. Then France was a Great Power and needed no protection. The whole business was at stake. If anywhere, then here the breach must be repaired.

The business was complicated or, if you will, made simple,

by the fact that the British a couple of years ago and more had smelled out this Algerian oil. As long ago as 1915, in fact. Then Lord Murray, sent out by the oil company S. Pearson & Co., had tried to get an oil concession which was to include over 730,000 hectares of what was obviously oil-bearing land in Algeria. After long negotiations, the concession had been refused for national reasons. Now in January 1919, for reasons which are known to us, England suddenly became pressing. Cost what it might, it had to get that Algerian concession before the French thought of shutting the land to the British. And now Mr. Basil Zaharoff took a hand in the game. The concession for this Algerian oil company—the Société d'Etudes, de Recherches et d'Exploitation des Pétroles en Algérie—which had been refused to Lord Murray, was secured by Mr. Basil Zaharoff in the twinkling of an eye. As a result there appeared on the Board of Directors —oh, no, not another member of the Clemenceau family !— a certain M. Olivier Sainsère, who was described as "a fellow Lorrainer and a personal friend of Poincaré," and who was obviously a very suitable person to become an oil magnate because he had been previously an *administrateur de la Société d'Assurances Universelles*. Mr. Zaharoff had agreed that only one-third of the Board would come from England, and two-thirds would come from France. The Englishmen were the Lord Murray who had been refused the concession, and another gentleman. But we shall examine a little more closely the gentlemen whose presence on the Board was to be a guarantee of the French character of the company. There is no need to worry ; the Frenchman, Basil Zaharoff—whose Frenchness was still contested in January 1919 and only furbished up again in July—is not among them. No, the Frenchmen are—if we except that friend of Poincaré—M. Léon Pissard of the Banque de la Seine, who was described as "the man of straw of Sir Basil Zaharoff who, besides, controls the enterprises of M. Pissard," and M. Nicolas Piétri

of the Banque de la Seine, who was described as "the intimate friend of Clemenceau and Zaharoff, of whom he is the agent," and finally a man above suspicion, M. Maurice Carrier, who had no connection at all with the Banque de la Seine—but only with another Zaharoff company, "Le Nickel." You can see that the gentleman with the imperial has once again succeeded in founding a "national industry." And he had every reason, a month or two later, to get further proof of his Frenchness through the Legion of Honour and to register the firm of Vickers française as a French firm—with a relative of M. Georges Clemenceau on the Board. And during the year yet another gentleman was summoned to the Board of this Algerian oil company—M. le Comte Léon Ostrorog. We do not know this nobleman. But we have among our papers a report—in many points reporting without any idea of the significance of what it does report—from a detective agency in Constantinople about Sir Basil Zaharoff's relations. There one may read :

Zaharoff married in Spain. His wife was a Spaniard (Jewess). Zaharoff had two daughters.

1. Madame Ostrologue (divorced); at her marriage ceremony she gave as her father's name not "Zaharoff" but "Basil !"

2. Unknown.

Count John Ostrologue now lives in Constantinople. Business : commission agent. His brother is in the French Consulate. Countess Ostrologue (Zaharoff's daughter) was well known in Stambul as the unique "protector of dogs and cats." Is said to have died of a disease which she got from her animals.

It may profit the reader to have this reproduction of the original text of a Turkish Sherlock Holmes. It needs some disentangling. The Duchess of Villafranca (it is the Duchess who certainly must be meant by the "Spaniard (Jewess)" unless, indeed, "Jewess" may take us back to Haje Elka Karolinski of Wilkomir, but Mr. Haim Manelewitsch Sahar had no sisters), the Duchess, I say, had in fact three daughters : Helen,

who died (and might be identical with that "protector of dogs and cats"); Mrs. Leopold Walford, wife of that Mr. L. H. G. Walford discovered by us on the board of that "Banque de la Seine"; and Angela, Princesse de Bourbon, formerly Countess Ostrorog (not Ostrologue). Anyway, that Count Ostrorog so closely related to Mr. Zaharoff was identical with, or at least related to, the nobleman on the Board of the Algerian Oil Company.

Mr. Basil Zaharoff, then, by making a detour *via* a "national foundation," came into control of the Algerian oil resources, which were in a position to decide the Anglo-French oil war. But anyone who thinks that was the end of the *coup* does not know our hero. It was really only now that it began. Our authority of the *Documents politiques* knows a little about the business success of the new company. And although he does not know the connection between it and the great *coup* he puts the situation in a very clear light :

By 1920 twelve wells were in operation. Then in an extraordinary way borings were now unsuccessful although they were made in an area which was extremely promising. Later they all had to be abandoned, a circumstance which in interested circles gave rise to some very queer rumours. It was known that it was in the interests of the foreign oil trust that France should not discover any oil wells on her own soil or in any of her colonial territories, for then she would remain permanently under the control of the foreign oil producers.

That means that Mr. Basil Zaharoff had got control of the Algerian oil fields not to exploit them but to prevent exploitation. We only hope that the friend of M. Poincaré did not as a result of this business failure lose his director's fees. It was a bold stroke. And, as France needed oil, she had once again to revive her Mosul hopes and—receive imports. Looked at strategically, the position was that the enemy had been prevented from rolling up the front ; the fighting had been localized.

What did Paris make of that? We can read in the *Documents politiques*:

Consequently we regard with special interest the relations of Lloyd George with . . . Sir Basil Zaharoff. Through Lloyd George, Mr. Zaharoff has the same influence with the British Government as he used to have with the French Government, thanks to Clemenceau. And it is most proper that M. Nicolas Pietri, whose relations with . . . Mr. Zaharoff we have explained, is also in very close relations with Clemenceau and the affairs of the Clemenceau family. He belongs to the Board of the Berna Milk company, one of the enterprises of M. Dutasta, whose relationship with Clemenceau is well known. This company during the war drew its main profits from the sale of condensed milk for the use of the German troops.

All that appears still more significant when one remembers that Lord Murray, who played his part . . . in the "Société d'Etudes, de Recherches et d'Exploitation des Pétroles en Algérie," was in France closely connected with Mr. Zaharoff's man of straw, and M. Poincaré's special friend, M. Olivier Sainsère. Here is a circumstance which one has to remember if one is to understand the attitude of Poincaré to Zaharoff.

We may pardon this wild search for combinations on the part of the French, who were excited, and not without good cause. But we have an excellent example here to what lengths the searching for niggers in the woodpile may go. It needs only another step on and you have Mr. Lloyd George in partnership with M. Clemenceau and M. Poincaré delivering condensed milk to the German army during the war!

But let us return to our strategical studies. The Algerian breach has been stopped; the only trump card left to the French was their hopes of Mosul's oil. Once again Mr. Basil Zaharoff had delivered the goods in an exemplary, not to say masterly, manner.

It was in 1918 that we left off our study of the affairs of Mosul. Let us explain the situation once again. Britain had promised

Mosul, which she had not previously had, as a result of military occupation; at the same time France possessed it by the Sykes–Picot agreement, and so did the Arabs by the Hussein–Macmahon agreement. Britain had won the war. Mosul was held by British troops, and now Downing Street was confronted by the problem of making good the promises that had been made. That where possible the French claims should be cancelled out by the Arab ones, and the Arab ones by the French, was a strategic necessity imposed by the facts of the case. The circumstances of the case were favourable to such a solution. In the first place, it was possible to browbeat the Arabs by telling them that Sir Arthur Henry Macmahon, who had concluded treaties with them during the war, had not been authorised to do so by the Foreign Office. In the second place, it was discovered that there was an important inaccuracy in the Sykes–Picot agreement, that in it there *was* mention of Syria and Mosul but obviously—in order to get the simplest formula—only of a Syria which in the east reached the vilayet of Mosul without any specific pledge that the eastern frontier of that Syria should exclude, include, or divide the oil-bearing areas. Here there was such a wealth of diplomatic talent at work and the stake was so high that it would be contrary to etiquette to use ethical rather than political standards. But Britain could not pursue with regard to the Arabs such a simple policy as that of doubting the full powers of her envoy when she remembered that she was dealing with an Islam which embraced the eternal problem of India. Because, therefore, it would not have been the worst solution to have an independent Arabia "in alliance with England" on the map, this theory of the dubiety of Sir Henry's plenipotentiary position was used simply as a minor means of exercising pressure in arranging the details of this alliance, and she proceeded to settle things at the expense of France, whose wings as the newly arisen strongest Continental Power must be clipped. And there was rich opportunity to do so

at the end of 1918, when it came to partitioning the globe. M. Clemenceau was in a quandary. To him defeated Germany had not been sufficiently defeated. Both on the Rhine and on the Oder it remained much too strong. In order to arrange things in this sphere according to the heart's desire, the assent of the British partner was needed. And, as even among partners nothing is given for nothing in this world, all the stage was set from a gigantic bargaining. Let us hear what Berlin thought, from the pages of Herr Hoffmann, of the School of Politics :

According to the secret minutes of the Big Four, Lloyd George had, as early as December 1918, got Clemenceau to consent to the handing over of Palestine to Britain and to the political renunciation of Mosul. This arrangement was so delicate a one that even Pichon, Clemenceau's deputy and Foreign Minister, only learned of it after it had been made. In compensation France was to get a share of the oil plunder and —a free hand in Germany during the armistice period.

And then comes the passage which is significant :

Some days later, at Christmas 1918, there happened, for instance, the Polish rising in Posen which created *faits accomplis* long before the signing of the Versailles Treaty.

Is this allegation only the result of German persecution mania ? In one way it would be rather comforting to believe it was. But one must not forget that it was the utterance of a Germany which had not yet gone mad. What actually happened in the years immediately following do not fit in with the theory that this alleged interchange of minor courtesies was simply political anecdote. Actually we are now witnessing the birth of Lloyd George's so-called "see-saw policy" at the one end of which was the Mosul vilayet, and at the other the Ruhr. This policy was to give Messrs. Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and Zaharoff some anxious moments, which we shall share.

This bargaining between Lloyd George and Clemenceau remained just as secret as the whole battle for Mosul between

France and England—until the turn of the year 1919–1920. Then Britain could hold out no longer and handed over to France—oh, no, not Mosul, but at least the oft-promised Syria. And now things went thus : On January 1, 1920, Britain handed over Syria, and in March the Syrian Druses broke out in rebellion and showed the new French masters of the land that they were anything but the masters of the land. It was a thorny business. Without wishing in any way to take sides, let us simply state that two years later the French—having on the occasion of another rising found the Druses and two other annoying tribes in possession of arms made by Vickers—stated plainly and bluntly that if it was not England who had been behind both Druse risings, it was at least Mr. Basil Zaharoff. We shall have to say something about that later. But at the moment of the first Druse rising there was, to be sure, no question of such "revelations," and the French confined themselves to quenching the rebellion in blood. Whereupon Feisal, the son of Hussein, in virtue of the Macmahon treaty, proclaimed himself King of Syria without more ado, and declared, indeed, that Mosul belonged to Syria—but that Syria belonged to him. Whereupon the French quenched *his* movements in blood and drove him out of the country.

Why did Britain thus heat the water for the French ? Why did the French repel this indirect attack with such fury ? Once again we can explain that best by referring to dates. The struggles lasted from January to the middle of April 1920. And in the middle of April they took the form, so to say, of *pourparlers*. At that time a conference was in session in San Remo which was to settle and guarantee for all time the fate of the Mosul area—and to create *faits accomplis* down there in the South-east was very much to the taste of both parties. What we know as the war with Feisal, the guerilla fighting of the Druses, and the occupation of the Straits was nothing more than the back stage for ten gentlemen who smoked fat cigars on the Riviera, and chatted about petrol. The

result: when the French, in spite of their unfriendly welcome, laid about them vigorously, when Feisal and the Druses got the worst of it, the French had to be given something. Quite a big something—fully 25 per cent.—England received 75 per cent. of the Mosul oil. The Americans, in spite of protests, got nothing.

That then was the eternal oil peace of San Remo. At the moment when its signatories were setting their names to the agreement they thought of nothing else than of seeing in it only another "scrap of paper." To that end the events that now happened in the East went on functioning of their own accord. The French had a bone to pick with the British enemy-ally. The British had been thoughtless enough to occupy Constantinople and make themselves thoroughly unpopular with the Turks. From France's point of view was not something to be expected of an awakening Turkey? So the French saw to it that Turkey awoke—a national Turkish State with its capital in Angora and hostile to England. This new Mohammedan state, hostile to England and protected by France, was now the chief danger for the British. They would, no doubt, have been able to come to some arrangement with it, but the French had blocked the way. So the new State had to be destroyed. To take the field against it in person was impossible by sheer weight of political tradition—and in any case it would have set all Islam in flames. So since the French had once more succeeded in rolling up the front, Lloyd George on his side was compelled to send new corps into the firing line. And as there were, for very good reasons, no British corps available, he looked for them elsewhere. That is the historical background for one of the most astounding adventures which contemporary history knows, the private war of a single individual, a private individual to boot, the now septuagenarian Basil Zaharoff against a mighty, populous, and still, or once again, Great Power.

Since we left Mr. Zaharoff pulling the wires in his marionette

theatre in Athens in 1917, there is something more to tell. The war has been won ; four gentlemen in Paris have played their game and remade the map ; they played the game out, thronged by petitioners, protesters, intriguers, apostles, and delegates who made war on one another, outcried each other, undermined each other, pushed and quarrelled to get a place at the great food trough. And among them there suddenly bobbed up M. Venizelos. He came forward—in the spring of 1919—waving in his hand a Turkish proclamation inciting to a massacre of the Christians in Smyrna. Is it genuine ? There is not much time to examine it ; the Big Four have many other cares, and besides, this intervention of M. Venizelos is under the very highest protection. Sir Basil Zaharoff embraces the Greek cause ! And as the Big Four have, as a result of the defection of the Italians, been transformed into the Big Three, of whom Lloyd George and Clemenceau rely on their friend with the imperial, and as the last of the Three, the angel of peace from over the seas, possibly does not know very accurately where Smyrna is, M. Venizelos receives the mandate to land his Greeks in Smyrna and prevent the threatened massacre. So it happens, and M. Venizelos stays, and is able to remain in Smyrna—and has, in spite of mild advice from Paris to go away again, created one of those beloved *faits accomplis* for the forthcoming peace negotiations with the Turks.

That was how things stood in the early summer of 1920, when out of those seasonal necessities which we know so well the latest French mode was created—the national anglophobe Turkey. And thus it happened that M. Venizelos was once again invited to Paris to confer with his patron Basil Zaharoff. And then things began to cloud over again.

What *did* happen there ?

One version, that of the ex-premier D., which is also the official version of the Venizelists, may be repeated simply as

a curiosity. I asked him if—no, I simply stated as a notorious fact that Basil Zaharoff had financed Greece's war against Turkey. To that the premier replied: "Financed? He never gave a pound for that war; he only felt it rather flattering that people could think he could lose so much."

But if that is the official version of the time there must have been earlier among the Venizelists another more passionate report, and one less deadlily wrapped in silence. You will encounter it if you speak to old gentlemen from Greece, men like our authority Ch. the banker, the same who was so unswervingly convinced of Zaharoff's murder of a policeman. He knew positively—and let it be seen that in his capacity as banker he had been concerned in the conveyance of the funds—that this war was financed by Zaharoff. To which he adds:

Zaharoff let our Venizelos down. Zaharoff and Lloyd George! We Greeks were bled white for Zaharoff. And it cost us much more than he paid, and when we asked for some of what we had spent back, we didn't get a drachma. That——(here followed a selection of insulting epithets from Homer).

Now the information does not seem to be quite of the sort on which one would care to rely.

Let us go further. The gist of the second version is that Basil Zaharoff and Lloyd George let the innocent Venizelos down. The third version is quite different. It is the Anglo-French one, and it alleges that Lloyd George was let down by Basil Zaharoff and Venizelos. In this connection let us read the oblique attack of Aubrey Herbert as it is revealed in the records of the British Parliament:

June 14, 1920.—The Hon. Aubrey Herbert asked the Prime Minister whether Sir Basil Zaharoff was consulted with regard to the Turkish Treaty.

The Prime Minister: The answer is in the negative.

No progress that way. So a week later Herbert tried again.

June 23, 1920.—The Hon. Aubrey Herbert asked why Sir Basil Zaharoff was not consulted with regard to the Turkish Treaty.

Mr. Bonar Law : I do not understand the object of my honourable friend's question.

The Hon. Aubrey Herbert : Is it not a fact that this distinguished Greek gentleman paid for the Smyrna expedition out of his own pocket and controls the greater amount of the shares of Vickers–Maxim ?

But even by that way he could make no progress. Bonar Law turned it off with a jest :

I was not aware of either of these facts, but I wish that he would defray the expenses of our own troops.

Later, Aubrey Herbert tried yet a third tack and asked the Prime Minister :

whether Sir Basil Zaharoff had been financially rewarded for his help and advice on the Eastern question.

But he had no more luck this time than before. He was reduced to silence on a point of order :

Mr. Chamberlain : I do not understand this question. If my honourable friend has any charge to formulate, I beg that he will state it in plain language.

The Hon. Aubrey Herbert : May I ask your ruling, Mr. Speaker ? My great difficulty is that, according to the Rules of Procedure in this House, it is quite impossible to put down the kind of question which I wish to put down. I have been driven to put down the question in this form because that is the only way in which I can draw attention to the sinister influence of this great multi-millionaire.

Mr. Speaker : That is just the point. An Hon. Member is not allowed to make insinuations in the form of a question. If the Hon. Member has a charge to make, he can make it in the form of a motion, but not in the form of a question.

Whereupon naturally the other side intervened and turned the tables on the questioner :

Mr. T. P. O'Connor : Is not such a question, attributing sinister motives to a man who notoriously gave most valuable and disinterested service to the Allies during the war, an abuse of the rules of the House ?

Mr. Speaker : There was a question tendered to me, but I struck out all the insinuations.

Thus Aubrey Herbert's attack was hung up on the wire. You can see : even in the British Parliament Zaharoff does not lack friends and supporters.

What I have just quoted will serve as a sample of the third version which, then, says that the innocent Lloyd George had been led astray in his Eastern policy by the two scoundrels, Zaharoff and Venizelos. But because of the circumstances of that policy, which we have already described, we cannot accept that. The much blamed Eastern policy of Lloyd George pleased England neither in its much too temperamental details nor in its final result, but it was not invented by Lloyd George. It was the result of a long process marked by the Macmahon agreement with Hussein, the Sykes–Picot treaty, the complaisances of Sir Edward Grey toward the French, and other things. He carried on his policy as the logical consequence of this heritage. That ought not to be overlooked, even if one still thinks that the chief political director of a world empire should have handled things at once more ably and more calmly. Sir Henry Wilson was driven to write :

It simply comes to this that we cannot have the Empire and Lloyd George. It's too expensive. One of them must go.

But let us leave that, and proceed to the fourth version. If the third version alleges that Lloyd George had been the tool of Basil Zaharoff, the fourth version, which is the real national French version, declares that Zaharoff was an agent

of Lloyd George, precisely, that "agent of the Intelligence Service" of whom we have already heard. We have only to inquire of Mr. Albin E. Johnson, who in connection with the Shearer scandal expanded on the theme of Basil Zaharoff in the review *La Lumière*. Someone "belonging to Lloyd George's more intimate circle" told him personally :

We use Sir Basil Zaharoff as a kind of super-spy in high society and in influential circles. At the same time we have him watched by two or three of our best police agents.

It is a pity that Mr. Johnson did not tell us the name of this person so worthy of confidence who belonged to the circle of a British Prime Minister.

How many versions have we now ? One : Zaharoff had nothing whatever to do with the Greco-Turkish War. Two : He led Venizelos into that war. Three : He and Venizelos led Lloyd George into it. Four : He was led into it by Lloyd George. But the fifth version is still more sensational ; it comes from Greek monarchist circles ; it went *via* Skuludis to Lewinsohn, and it says that Zaharoff did finance the Greek campaign against the Turks, but neither as an instigator nor as one instigated, neither for the sake of England's interests nor his own, but for sheer love of country. For a greater Greece ! For the dream of Byzantium !

Thus version five : Sir Basil Zaharoff the Greek patriot. Shall we say that each of these versions has a grain of truth and a good deal of falsehood in it ? That in its motives this action of Mr. Zaharoff is as complex and complicated as all his other deeds and adventures ? Perhaps we get nearest to the truth if we try once again to put his private business and the business of high politics on the same table.

What about dates in this summer and autumn of 1920 ?

The Druses have been crushed ; the Emir Feisal has been driven out of Syria by the French ; the French have won not

unimportant successes at the San Remo Conference, and are conspiring with the awakening Turks—we are writing now of early summer 1920—and the British counterstroke is now due. Then in all haste a bank was founded in Paris called the Banque commerciale de la Méditerranée, which at once, that is to say, on June 7, 1920, opened two branches in Constantinople, which was then occupied by the British. Thus it was an expression of French commercial activity in the land of the new Turkish friend, a demonstration on the Straits where the British had disembarked marines. France is at work! Thus ran the headlines in the French papers welcoming the new action of French capital in the East. A political bank! There were good French names among those who shared in the bank's foundation. For instance, the president was a particularly happy choice, a genuine Frenchman born in Constantinople, by name Léon Pissard. He brings real good Frenchmen with him to the list of founders and to the board of directors—for instance, a private bank in Paris called Thalmann, and a Paris–Athens private bank called Mavrogordato fils, and at the end appears in this goodly company the Banque de la Seine itself. And last of all one may see so high a personage as a Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour. A certain Monsieur Zaharoff!

Scarcely two weeks elapsed before more information was available on the reasons for the founding of this national French propaganda bank. The Banque Méditerranée, meantime, despite its tender years, had already entered the ranks of founders of companies, and in all haste founded in Paris a "société française des Docks et Ateliers de Constructions navales," and this company, though scarcely two days old (in which Vickers Limited with its Sir Vincent Caillard and "Monsieur le Comte Léon Ostrorog" now showed its face), equally developed at a tremendous pace. Before the third week in June it was displaying a furious activity with the object of getting transferred to it by the Turks that company founded

by Vickers before the war—the Docks et Ateliers du Haut Bosphore—and with it to secure possession of the entire Turkish munition and ship-construction industry which depended on it.

But let us say at once : this comprehensive scheme failed. The idea of Mr. Zaharoff through the detour—which we may now set down in our text-book—*via* a national new French bank and two intermediate States and positions for emitting smoke-screens to safeguard Vickers' capital, and also at the same time to filch from the Turks at a stroke their armament industry—that scheme failed through lack of time. The most unoriental haste of its promoters made the Turks suspicious. Or perhaps there came a warning from the ever watchful France. The session in which the Turks were to hand over their arsenals to Mr. Zaharoff took place on June 18, 1920. The Turks delayed signing and wanted another postponement. And then it was too late. Then it was seen why Mr. Zaharoff had been in so frantic a hurry. On June 22nd it was learned that the increased activity in the port of Smyrna, which had been reported by Turkish spies, had been the preliminaries to a great Greek offensive. A Greek army, equipped with Messrs. Vickers' most up-to-date weapons issued from Smyrna on June 22nd and marched against awakened Turkey. Mr. Zaharoff's claim to the docks on the Bosphorus had to be postponed.

Thus we come to June 22, 1920. The story of this first stage of Zaharoff's war against the Turks is soon told. Turkey was in full confusion. The new nationalists of Angora, led by a certain Mustapha Kemal, were waging civil war against the adherents of the Sultan. So the Greeks met with little resistance, and marched inland from Smyrna and the Sea of Marmora. In a few weeks they were in possession of the best part of the Anatolian coastland. Then once again the French showed that they were on the watch, and the Italians that they were envious of the plunder, and, as at that moment it

was the pleasure of the haughty rulers in Paris to dictate the peace of Sevrès, the Turks lost much, but the Greeks did not get all they had got as a result of their little-disturbed anabasis. None the less—there still remained the possibility of a "a mandate" for Smyrna and an extensive hinterland. If one takes it that the aim of the Anglo-Zaharoff war was the destruction of Turkey, then that aim, in spite of a victorious advance and many conquests, had not yet been gained. And to bring still more pressure to bear, to maintain the offensive, to think of modifications—of all that Mr. Basil Zaharoff was not free to think in the course of the next few months. For the watchfulness of the French which put the brake on the offensive of his Greeks, which four days before the war began had countered him in the matter of the acquisition of the Turkish arsenals—this watchfulness led to a counter-attack on another front and drove Mr. Basil Zaharoff and the whole Shell oil policy on to the defensive. They had their hands full saving their own skin in France itself.

Back to France then ! At what point did we leave Mr. Zaharoff there with his triumphs ? The French were certainly once more on guard, but not so completely on guard as to be able to prevent the delicate plant of the Algerian oil hopes from fading away in his clutching old hands. And so there was a sort of crisis of confidence in a certain Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour ; at the time of the San Remo Agreement, when Vickers rifles were found with the Druses and the Emir Feisal, there was not the same trust in the Frenchness of the gentleman with the imperial as there had been a year before—and the Americans, too, who had been victoriously pressed back, were now returning to the charge. In the spring of 1920 an expedition led by two gentlemen from Standard Oil—Alfred Cotton Bedford and Walter Clark Teagle were the names of the heroes from across the seas—began to exercise pressure in the city on the Seine. The conquest of the French home market and Mosul—their secret plans did not differ

by one iota from those of Mr. Basil Zaharoff. Only this campaign, directed against England with the plunder of France as aim, was waged by the Americans more directly and less in the oriental manner. The French oil interests therewith ceased to be the subject of what might be called an intimate Anglo-French dispute ; they became objects, became one of the objects of the great rivalry between the two Anglo-Saxon World Powers. That is to say the Anglo-French war became from that time a part of the greater Anglo-American war. Or to put it mathematically, as France was to Turkey so the United States was to France—F : T = A : F.

The first American objective in this new stage of the war was the expulsion of Mr. Zaharoff and Shell from the French home market. If Mr. Zaharoff had in his hands for furthering Shell's business, the Banque de l'Union parisienne, Standard Oil now took possession of the second big bank, the competitor, the Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas. Here, when it was engaged in the conquest of the Banque Paris Pays-Bas, it had to meet the first counter-attack of its Levantine opponent. A great French bank like the Paris Pays-Bas had necessarily old connections with the heavy industry—that is, with these gentlemen in Le Creusot and on the Comité des Forges, who, in their turn, were associates of Mr. Zaharoff in the rival bank. Thus Sir Basil had a little word to say, at least indirectly, regarding the alliance of Standard Oil and the Banque Paris Pays-Bas. Stop it ? No, that is impossible. But if he does not, it is the end. And so Herr Hoffmann of the Berlin School of Politics has to say that the Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas was only allowed to turn to the American side on condition that it "handed over to English finance" its influence on the Russo-Asiatic Bank. This remark of Herr Hoffmann ought to be closely studied by the future historian of crime. The Russo-Asiatic Bank was the bank that held the concession for the Chinese Eastern Railway, that line running from the trans-continental Siberian railway that gives access to the Pacific,

and for whose possession a fierce struggle had been raging for years and goes on up to this day. In other words, Zaharoff has had to yield ground before the attack of Standard Oil in the banking world of Paris, but, as compensation, he has got an influence in the Eastern battleground which in its extent and results cannot yet be surveyed.

To yield ground! And it was not ended, the yielding process. Now that France had resolved to use Beelzebub to drive out Satan and had summoned the Standard Oil to its aid, our hero with the imperial found himself engaged in rearguard actions along the whole line of his deployment in France. In that bargaining over the Chinese Eastern Railway, Standard Oil seems to have retained something for itself. On the board of directors of the Banque de la Seine, that is to say in the very headquarters itself of Mr. Zaharoff, there suddenly appeared a Mr. Edward Tuck, representing an important minority holding. The address of this Mr. Tuck is the same as that of Standard française! Standard Oil is advancing. Entry into the enemy headquarters; the valiant Americans may well have been proud of their success. That the victorious Mr. Tuck in this purchase of shares had been rather let down by the old Levantine was first apparent a little later. We shall speak of it later. It was a Pyrrhic victory, a Danaan gift, or any other historical or mythological name one likes to give it. The shares were to all intents and purposes worthless.

But this was just a Levantine jest, a local success for the rearguard. The retreat remained a retreat. It was a war to the knife which even in the account given by the moderate Herr Hoffmann was "waged in the most intimate way of intrigue in the political salons and banks." Details might be given in a text-book, but not in the kind of book which we were trying to write for budding armament kings; only in a text-book of criminology. As example, take this one typical bit of sharp practice:

Since 1906 there had been in existence an insignificant

shipping company called the Société navale de l'Ouest. One day Mr. Zaharoff got control of it and made it a noble company by increasing its capital from three to forty million francs. What was a shipping company to do with such a lot more money ? It bought ships ! Where ? From the Vickers company of course. Only later did the true story of the purchase of the ships come out in connection with the failure of the company in 1923. We can read this in the *Tribune de Paris* :

The price of construction which Mr. Basil Zaharoff charged to the Société navale de l'Ouest resulted in heavy burdens being imposed upon it, in preventing it from carrying on business, and in the failure sooner or later of the company and its disappearance into the abyss which swallowed also the millions of the luckless shareholders. When Zaharoff negotiated with Vickers for the building of a number of ships for the Société navale de l'Ouest he got a commission of £7 per ton. By a delivery of 200,000 tons he got away with £1,400,000.

A small but clever catch, a commercial jest of the great man, an example of what the French always ascribe to him—"amour de la commission." But we are not yet at the year 1923 ; we are still at the end of 1920 ; the battle in France between Shell and Standard Oil has been drawn, and the English oil capital has by no means given up the fight for the French home market as hopeless. At least there remains that other great and undefeated English oil company which can be used to make a flank attack on the victoriously advancing Americans—the Anglo-Persian. So, at the beginning of 1921, Zaharoff started a new company, though finding himself driven to retreat on every point on his front in France—the Société générale des Huiles de Pétrole. The founders were the Anglo-Persian and that shipping company, the Société navale de l'Ouest, of which we have just read that it was tottering, thanks to its costly purchase of ships from Vickers. The complaisant Press announced the new company as a

member of a model vertical trust: the shipyards of Vickers build ships for the Société navale de l'Ouest, which bring the oil of the Anglo-Persian to France to the new company Huiles de Pétrole, which puts it out on the home market. That is a constructive scheme, as was evident also to the French shareholders. After six months Mr. Basil Zaharoff was able to raise the capital of the new company from one hundred to two hundred and twenty-seven million francs. For that purpose, the Navale de l'Ouest used, so to say, the last franc in its coffers in subscribing for all the shares it could get in the new Huiles de Pétrole. After this transaction was over, the Navale de l'Ouest was nothing but an empty sausage-skin; Mr. Zaharoff had salved all the meat for the new and sound Huiles de Pétrole. The skin he left to the earlier shareholders—and took no further interest. Until at last, as we have read, the sausage skin in 1923 was buried by the old shareholders and by the small new French ones who were attracted by the expanding activities of the founder. Thus a manœuvre in retreat whereby Mr. Zaharoff, as we hope, saved the last franc he had invested—behind the camouflage of founding a firm and raising its capital, which must have awakened in the minds of those who did not know the inside story the impression that Mr. Zaharoff was not withdrawing from the French battlefield, but was continuing steadily his advance.

Actually he had lost the battle. And now the papers told the tale. Mr. Zaharoff had closed the mouth of his chief assailant in Paris, the *Petit Parisien*, by handing over to it his old *Excelsior*. On January 1, 1921 the *Petit Parisien* turned anglophil. Whereupon the Standard Oil by means of the Banque Paris Pays-Bas got control of the hitherto anglophil *Matin* which, on that same January 1, 1921, began to fulminate against Mr. Zaharoff and the English. So at the twelfth hour General Zaharoff had to strengthen his rearguard so as at least to cover his retreating columns from the murderous attacks of *francs-*

tireurs. How did he do it? We may read how in Menevée, who writes :

For this purpose Zaharoff made use of those personalities in French politics whose policies had chimed in well with the aims of Britain, of M. Georges Clemenceau, and his various satellites from M. André Tardieu to M. Nicolas Piétri. So a new daily appeared, the *Echo National*, whose founder was M. Georges Clemenceau and whose political director was M. André Tardieu.

So the hostile armies had taken to shooting at each other with newspapers. As conscientious historians let us see how this new paper wrote. Here is a typical passage from a leading article :

It certainly needed a Briand or a Franklin–Bouillon to involve us in a conflict with England over these Angora Turks in a way that they would not have risked doing when it was a question of securing the German debt to France.

That is enough. We are on the right track. The *Echo National* existed for a year, then it disappeared. It had fulfilled its mission and covered the retreat. The retreating troops were now within their own frontiers again.

So there remained, therefore, only the other front, the Eastern one, which was of paramount importance to the great war aim, the conquest of Mosul. As long as Zaharoff was not defeated in the East he was not yet defeated. If he succeeded in torpedoing France's Eastern policy by finally bringing France's latest protégé, Angora, to its knees, then the expulsion of the Zaharoff–Deterding oil-armies from France itself was only an episode, an intermezzo. If we reckon rightly, then the Greeks who, since the peace of Sevrès, had been sitting in Smyrna, would soon be impelled by sheer irresistible force of patriotism to advance eastward once again. An

American, Scott Nearing, says in his book *Oil and the Germs of War*:

The Anatolian war between the Angora Turks and the Greeks, which was at the same time a war between French and English oil policies, was carried on with special regard to the Mesopotamian–Asia Minor oil question, and actually at the bidding of the great oil interests. Greece fought under orders from Shell, which sheltered behind the British Government, and Turkey on orders from the Standard Oil group, whose part as a world power was supported not by the United States but by France.

That is just what we have gathered in other ways and from other sources, but the circumstances and motives of this war are so extraordinary that one cannot have too many sworn helpers to back one.

Thus here the private history of Mr. Zaharoff becomes really world history. Greece—that means Venizelos? No, this time Venizelos has nothing to do with it; he is as innocent as a new-born babe. The ways of the politician are wonderful. After the victorious advance of June and July 1920, after the conclusion of the Peace of Sevrès, after the conquest of a Smyrna with an extensive hinterland, he had returned home to Greece in triumph; he had even had the luck to realize the dearest wish of every statesman, to have that superb chance of popularity which comes from escaping an attempt on one's life—he escaped an assassin at Lyons. But fate gave into the hands of his enemies, the Greek dynasty, another chance for popularity, and the people's statesman as a result was overthrown. Alexander, King of Greece, son of the expelled Constantine, was bitten by an angry ape in the park of his castle at Tatoi. Blood-poisoning; rumours in Athens that the ape had been infected with germs and incited to attack the king. Then the young monarch, well deserving to be mourned, died, and the monarchist party came to the top. The first result:

Venizelos, who was too secure of himself and careless, held new elections, was completely beaten and left the country. The second result : the banished King Constantine was recalled by a plebiscite and entered Athens. The third result : Mr. Basil Zaharoff, because in the early summer of 1921 he felt the need of a little more Greek patriotism, no longer adhered to the tried friend and statesman, but went over to the monarch whom he had helped to overthrow during the war.

Not that that presented any difficulties to him. The brother-in-law of Wilhelm II had also annexationist ambitions. He too had a high opinion of Vickers guns and had a certain weakness for gold.

Sir Basil Zaharoff took four million pounds from his own pocket for the equipment of the Greek troops for this Asia Minor campaign

declares Aubrey Herbert, already known to us for his persistence on the occasion of a later attack in the House of Commons. Other estimates of Zaharoff's private expenditure go far above Herbert's—to thirty million pounds. But that latter figure given by the Communists is undoubtedly exaggerated. But back to the new and the old King Constantine ! He took the weapons and the money of his supporter—there are Venizelists who allege that Mr. Basil Zaharoff had already financed the return of the king and the public opinion that made it possible. It is certain, anyway, that the king at once unsheathed the sword and went off to General Headquarters in Smyrna. The Greek Army was three hundred thousand strong ; it was equipped with Zaharoff's best motorized artillery, with the most up-to-date flame-throwers, with Maxim guns, with bombing planes and Vickers tanks ; the great offensive of the gentleman with the imperial began—amid the angry protests of the French, but good wishes from Mr. Lloyd George—on July 10, 1921.

An offensive—against whom ? Here was where in the

reckoning of our Levantine and his royal man of straw, and in the reckoning of Mr. Lloyd George, as well, there was a dangerous error. The Turks of the summer of 1921 were no longer the Turks of the summer of 1920. The peace of Sevrès, as happened elsewhere with dictated peaces, had greatly strengthened the Nationalist spirit. The civil war between the adherents of the Sultan and the Nationalists had ended with the adherence to the Nationalists of the Sultan's party; the "enemy within the gate," which is indispensable to a revolutionary movement—for the Turks it was the Armenians—was once again massacred; the French and the Bolsheviks helped with money and munitions; in short, Mustapha Kemal could look at the offensive of Mr. Zaharoff with much more equanimity than he could have done twelve months before. Still, with these Greeks who, just as little as the English, knew of that anonymous pacifist pamphlet which said that "the call to arms came not from king or country but from the armaments maker, Basil Zaharoff," with these Greeks who went into battle for the sake of the dream of a new Byzantine empire, with this new anabasis of the three hundred thousand, it was not easy, even for an awakened and united Turkey, to reckon. On July 10th the Greek offensive began; on the 19th they took Eski-shehr; on the 25th they threw the Turks back across the River Sakkaria. On August 5th Mustapha Kemal assumed supreme command of the army. The decisive battle began on the 14th—the battle of the Sakkaria, a battle between oil trusts, a tragedy in memory of a certain Mr. Zaharoff, which was the most savage and bloody battle in the long history of the Greco-Turkish feud. It lasted two and twenty days. The Greeks went back step by step and devastated the land as they went. The Turks exhausted almost to death following them at a day or two's distance. At Eski-shehr, from which the last Greek advance had begun, both sides dug themselves in. The Turks celebrate the Sakkaria as a great victory. But a Mohammedan authority of ours, E.,

the bearer of a famous Turkish name and a trustworthy witness on what then happened in the Near East told me that the battle of the Sakkaria had been won by a misunderstanding or by an accident. Mustapha Kemal had ordered the retreat to begin at seven o'clock on the two and twentieth day. But King Constantine had ordered it for four o'clock ! In any case the advance of the Greek army had been smashed. The troops which now lay in the trenches of Eski-shehr were no longer capable of fighting. Unless a miracle happened Zaharoff, with his friend Lloyd George and his royal man of straw, Constantine, had lost the game, a game in which the stakes were perilously high.

No miracle happened, but what did come, and in ever-increasing strength, was the echo of what had happened. On August 16th, that is while the battle of the Sakkaria was still in progress, it was already audible—even in England. Here is a passage from a speech by Mr. Guinness in the House of Commons :

If the Silesian danger is in a fair way of being settled, the next most important problem outstanding is that of the Near East, and on that score I must say that the statement of the Prime Minister seemed to me this afternoon to be most unsatisfactory. His attitude was that of the old Turks after the revolution towards the dogs of Constantinople. These unfortunate animals were shipped off to an island—and left there to destroy each other. That practically is the policy which the Prime Minister tells us this afternoon he considers most suitable for application to Anatolia. It is a most cynical policy and I think it is a disastrous policy in the interests of reconstruction throughout the world. The only explanation, I am afraid, is that our foreign affairs are run not by the Foreign Office, but by the Prime Minister personally. I suspect that experts in a position to give him advice founded on experience and knowledge are very rarely consulted. This is not to say that the Prime Minister has no counsellors. I believe that in this matter the voice behind the throne, or I should say the

voice behind the presidential chair, is that of Sir Basil Zaharoff. He is, no doubt, a very able financier. Outside political circles his chief fame is that he does or did control the armament industries in four or five countries. But even more than his financial power is the fact that, although he is British enough to be a Grand Cross of the Bath and a Grand Cross of the British Empire, he remains primarily, I believe, a Greek. If we are to be ruled in foreign affairs, not by experts but by a presidential system, we can at least ask that the voices which he hears should be British voices, and the interests those of his own country, or at least of the Entente.

And then it was heard on the other side of the Channel. There, too, the echoes grew. This opportunity for once of picking a quarrel with Britain and so with the suspected Mr. Zaharoff and especially with the much hated M. Georges Clemenceau—that opportunity could not fail to be taken. Here it was Briand's friend and Clemenceau's foe, Henry de Jouvenel, who directed the orchestra in the *Matin* which, as we know, had since a certain first of January become Anglophobe and the house organ of Standard Oil. Let us read what he says :

ENGLAND'S GREEK MISTAKE OR THE POLICY OF SIR BASIL ZAHAROFF

Sir Basil Zaharoff has been called the mystery man of Europe. Mysterious, no doubt, but M. Zaharoff is certainly not unknown in France. Before the war he showered his gifts on our seats of learning and they publicly expressed their gratitude. Once he bought a newspaper which was only half-political ; that was taken to be the caprice of a Maecenas. During the war he founded a newsagency which was to be at the service of the French Press ; that was the cleverest way to influence and bias it. The first person to show unease was, I believe, Clemenceau. When he came into power, M. Zaharoff was among those threatened. Then everything was publicly arranged when a few days later he received the Grand Cross of the Legion of

Honour. Since then a member of the Clemenceau family has become one of M. Zaharoff's business partners. And M. Zaharoff is directly or indirectly chief proprietor of the newspaper in which the ghost of M. Clemenceau will shortly reappear.

We would not like to levy at this cosmopolitan banker who is a multi-millionaire, who was born in Greece, who has been made a knight in England and Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour in France, the reproach that here and elsewhere he has used his influence in the cause of his native land. No, the scandal lies with his satellites. His native land is neither France nor England. But woe to the nations who let themselves be pressed into the service of international finance. Fortunately French policy has recovered its independence even with respect to M. Zaharoff. France once again has become the shield of Islam. And if England has reckoned up the price which it will have to pay from India to Egypt for a policy *à la* Zaharoff, it will no doubt realize that it must again conclude peace with Islam. Then it can certainly count on our good services. For whatever Lloyd George and particularly Lord Curzon may think, there is no difference between Great Britain and ourselves as to the objective, but merely a difference of opinion regarding the way to get to it.

With that the signal was given. With that there began the society game of revelations. Now it is known in Paris who this Mr. Zaharoff is. Nay, rather, at a stroke everyone says that he has always known. The Levantine is not only stripped to the skin—more clothes, indeed, are stripped from him than ever he had on his body—Shell, Anatolia, Mosul, Algeria, Monaco, and the Bank of France; now the scales fall from every eye. This Mr. Basil Zaharoff is anti-Christ, and behind this anti-Christ stands the old enemy, England. This now is the point at which in any sort of affair in France someone makes the discovery that somewhere, somehow, in some mysterious way the still more mysterious British "Intelligence Service" is at work. That mysterious communication from "a

personality of the Lloyd George circle," about the "super-spy" Zaharoff we already know. Now people went much further back. Thirty years, forty years—what does it matter? Here even our very judicial Zaharoff specialist, Menevée, for once loses his level head and writes:

Zaharoff, it is supposed, came to France in 1889 on the occasion of the great exhibition. This date is particularly significant if one remembers the part which he played later. For 1889–1890—that was the time when the descent of Cornelius Hertz began. It would be important to know in full sufficiency the function that Zaharoff was then exercising in France. Did he then begin to make preparations to take up Cornelius Hertz's succession in that powerful organization which for centuries has directed England's policy, the organization which is called the "Intelligence Service"? Are there not many points of contact between the activities of Messrs. Hertz and Zaharoff?

The comparison is even more extraordinary if one thinks a little about the facts. The part played by Hertz in the journalistic and political life of Clemenceau is possibly forgotten by many, and yet it is not to be underestimated. And Zaharoff does precisely what Hertz did. He too has his mysteries with Clemenceau. For instance, Cornelius Hertz owned the *Justice*, which was Clemenceau's paper—and Zaharoff owned the *Echo National*, which was Clemenceau's paper. That was why Clemenceau recommended Hertz for honours, and on the three of the five occasions when Zaharoff received honours Clemenceau was again at the head of the Government of France.

That and no more. We can easily laugh. We can easily say that the accusation against the old Tiger who so many times showed his flaming French patriotism—and not for the last time in the struggle with Lloyd George—is nothing else but absurd. We can easily establish that Mr. Lloyd George could scarcely have done anything else than draw the logical conclusions from the political premises. We could easily plead as grounds

for lenience for Mr. Basil Zaharoff in the special circumstances for his acts as a war-monger, affection and patriotism, human, all too human qualities. But for those who were the victims of this battue the affair was deadly serious.

How did they react? The man with the imperial held his peace. Not a quiver in his face betrayed him when he was overrun by newspapermen seeking a new sensation, by excited politicians. The looking after the wrecks of his positions in France he left to the partners whom he had so carefully taken into partnership. Mr. Tuck of the Standard Oil, who a short time before had entered with flags flying into the Banque de la Seine was, we fear, not too pleased with his triumph and with the possession of his new shares. At that time the *Action française et étrangère* wrote :

The Collapse of Greece seems to have shattered Zaharoff's power. Will he at last pack up and go ? Things are going badly with the Banque de la Seine. Its shares have fallen from 500 to 225. Why doesn't M. Zaharoff stop the rot ? He was able to pay four hundred million francs for the Greek Army and he hasn't ten million for his bank ?

Will he at last pack up and go ? The great man hasn't heard words like this for fifty years. A memory of youth. But to treat a self-made man in that way is a psychological error and it is certainly not the way to get him to take his purse out of his pocket. A man who is insulted never pays. In November 1922 the bank, into which as a good bargain the victorious Mr. Tuck had bought his way, was in some straits, in June 1923 was in difficulties over quite a small sum, and by the next time an election of directors came round the last of Sir Basil's men of straw had cleared out.

No, not quite so unwept and unsung did the English knight now pack up and go as in 1873. He departed from France with a gesture which does all honour both to his knighthood and to his southern blood. He endowed a seamen's home, a

chair, a university—these were things of the past. Now, when he was being overwhelmed in a wave of national indignation, and maligned by a crowd of newspapers which a short time ago had been glad to receive his favours, he endowed a prize for literature. And he called it "the Prix Balzac." This man who at his age had become the incarnation of Baron Nucingen, attached his name to that of the author of the *Comédie humaine*. If that is not just a jest of fate it is at least a symbol. And at this hour of disaster the greatest gesture of supreme irony that could be imagined.

Mr. Lloyd George's temperament is very different. He has the ability not merely to negotiate but to orate. In Manchester he appeared before his fellow-countrymen and explained to them the great peace aims which he had pursued with his—he actually did say "his"—Eastern policy. Freedom of trade on the Bosphorus. Saving Europe from a new war. Prevention of Turkish atrocities in Constantinople and Thrace! Ah, the grey-haired man who stands before his electors has been seventeen years in the Government and for six years has ruled a world empire. A man like that does not give up a fight so easily. A fine actor such as he has been all his life long, he perhaps believes even at this hour that he has undertaken a crusade against the unbelievers. What do they really know, all those who cast stones at him now? Now Sir Henry Wilson, the friend and collaborator of yesterday, writes:

Mr. Lloyd George has put his money on the wrong horse. We shall never get peace in Palestine or Mesopotamia or Egypt or India until we make love to the Turks. It may be very immoral or it may not; it is a fact. Can anyone tell me why Mr. Lloyd George backed the Greeks? I don't know and I am going to ask him as soon as I get a chance. I know it was not by the advice of George Nathaniel Curzon or the British Ambassador at Constantinople or Lord Reading. That at least has come out. I was at the Quai d'Orsay when the three of them including Lloyd George gave Smyrna to the Greeks, and I

had to arrange for troops to go there. I had no say in the matter. It was an affair of high policy. Venizelos went at once with me to my hotel, the Astoria. He was always a good friend and I told him plainly that he had ruined his country. He pooh-poohed the idea. I said : "If you go to Smyrna you must go to Armenia or get out." That wasn't clever. It was just common sense. You can't hold a seaboard town with the Turks sitting all round you on the hills like wolves licking their chaps. So they got Smyrna and had to take the railway and at this minute they are losing the railway and in time they will have to get out. But why did Lloyd George back them ? Was it to please Zaharoff or was it because Venizelos told him that Greeks were so prolific that they would people Near East Asia in two or three years ?

Lord Beaverbrook, the newspaper king, demanded that the doors of Government offices should at last be shut to Sir Basil Zaharoff and his agents. And the *Daily Mail* said that this Levantine must be taught that the English nation was determined to be master in its own house. And again the persistent Aubrey Herbert asked :

If Sir Basil was consulted before the Greek landing at Smyrna by the Foreign Office or by the Prime Minister.

No, by Heaven, and once again, no ; he has never been called into council. It is the duty of a gentleman sometimes to lie in politics, just as much as when there is a woman in the case. Zaharoff, Zaharoff, and yet again Zaharoff. Everyone now thinks himself cleverer than he. Of the real background, of the great strategic conception in which this private Anatolian affair of his friend Zaharoff is only a stage in a process, of the secret Franco-Anglo-American oil war for world dominion, he must not speak. So he holds his peace. "I shall not say what might be injurious to my native land," he wrote briefly at the head of his memoirs. Perhaps there is a truer greatness of character behind these words than can be realized to-day.

It remains to tell that destiny took its course. In order to make the British defeat more pointed, the Quai d'Orsay, which had learned something from its enemies, signed the Treaty of Angora by which it, as it were, presented Mosul, which now obviously could not be obtained by the *grande nation*, to the Turks. Lloyd George took his revenge ; he recognized the Feisal who had been driven out of Syria by the French as the rightful king of Irak. Thus France was once again forced to move. It was determined to give a last push to the tottering edifice of its foes. In the battle-front there was a *punctum minoris resistentiae*—the Greeks defeated at the battle of the Sakkaria. On August 26, 1922, Mustapha Kemal attacked them in their old positions and annihilated them. The Greek army broke in pieces. The regiments dissolved into rebellious mobs. The Turkish cavalry pressed on their heels. Turkish villages, Greek villages went up in fire and flame. Old men, women, and children were hacked in pieces. No prisoners were made. Thus this smoking, bloody, dying ebb and flow of flight and pursuit reeled to the coast. "In fourteen days I shall be in Smyrna," said Mustapha Kemal when the attack began. He took the town on September 9th. It was given to the flames. The wreck of an army, decimated and shattered to bits, and with it hundreds of thousands of Anatolian Greeks, all of them fled neck and crop in utter misery, carrying infection with them, over to the mother-land across the sea. In Athens there was a great upheaval. Six ministers condemned for high treason faced a firing party. The king and commander-in-chief, Constantine, was hounded out of his land with insult and mockery—for the second time ; by his own people this time, without any pressure from outside. Barely three months later he died in Palermo.

That was the reckoning in Athens. In London the reckoning was made in calmer fashion. The Conservatives left the Government. Thus Lloyd George was overthrown. On October 19, 1922, he handed in his resignation.

But the man who had contrived all that, who had paid for it out of his own pocket, who had let it come to an affair of flesh and blood and particularly blood, the three-and-seventy-year-old Sir Basil Zaharoff, "the inspirer of British policy," the richest man in the world, "the man of mystery," and Grand Cross of the highest order in the land of the arch-enemy—at this moment he is not to be found. He has disappeared.

V

NATIONS AS PAWNS

Now for the first time we shall let our hero disappear into the background and take the chance to get our breath. Into what a tangled jungle of lust of power, world policy, and vileness have we all unwittingly wandered! It is more than necessary to halt and take the chance to draw breath, and to understand what actually has happened.

That daring double attack on the Great Power, France, that strategic plan to defeat her by striking her in the East while she was being struck as well, and primarily, on her own soil, has failed. Mr. Zaharoff's positions on the Seine have been too vividly revealed for him to go on making an effort to stay in the country. But this statement requires a little qualification. Amid the wreck of his fronts in France, the gentleman from the Levant had stoutly maintained one single, strong, and carefully prepared position, and assured it; that is the stronghold in that big bank of Paris which is called the Banque de l'Union parisienne. Such a bank pursues its own policy independent even of the Quai d'Orsay; and here Sir Basil Zaharoff, despite the fact that his private fortune is down by a couple of hundred million francs as a result of his private adventure in Anatolia, counts for quite as much as the Vickers company counts with the Schneider firm in Le Creusot. Should the gentleman who has been crushed bob up again after all, and should he still take an interest in business, and especially, considering the incalculable obstinacy of old men, in the petrol business, then we might witness the Vickers company, the makers of guns, the builders of warships, become involved in the Mosul oil policy.

Now what is the actual situation in the war for Mosul? Greece is destroyed. Mr. Zaharoff has been expelled from

France and for the moment has disappeared. Lloyd George has fallen. At the end of the year 1922 the British Empire was having a thin time. What was now set a-going from London was a bold, complicated, and masterly policy of rectification. Its director was Lord Curzon.

His first action was to blow up the American corner of the triangle France—America—Turkey. It is never too difficult for the Anglo-Saxon masters of the world to come to an agreement. In America there were three groups interested in Mosul. The first, the legitimists, if we may so describe them, is the group round old Admiral Chester who, at the turn of the century, had discovered the Mosul oil fields, and since then had ever and anon appeared as a claimant to the concession. Mr. Chester had the audacity to try to carry on his business in opposition to the all-powerful Standard Oil; since that day he could obtain no more capital in his own country. So this eternal and unlucky competitor is impotent, but he is still quite good enough to be used as a cover. That holds good, too, for the second American group. We may remember that the pious Abdul Hamid at the moment when British, Germans, and Americans began to take an interest in concessions, had transferred the vilayet of Mosul from the domain of the State to his own private estate. The pious Sultan in the meantime was overthrown, and had since died. But, as is usually the case with sultans, he possessed simply an amazing number of descendants. And then there came into the head of an energetic American lawyer named Untermeyer the idea of creating a syndicate out of these "heirs of Abdul Hamid," these semi-princesses, pianists in bars, and taxicab drivers who were strewn over half the globe, and to demand the vilayet of Mosul with its oil as their heritage. These people are equally impotent and their claims hopeless, but it is not impossible that they can be made use of. There remains the third American group, the real great power—Standard Oil. It possesses no moral priority claim as does Admiral Chester; it has not to its hand an Eastern

ruler whose penchant is women and children like the protégés of Mr. Untermeyer. In the manner of a Great Power it makes no appeal at all to a legal title, but demands the application of the principle of "the open door." Against that there is no argument; one can only pay up. So once again a treaty is signed. It is called the Cadman treaty, and by it Britain promises one quarter of Mosul oil to the Standard Company.

By thus sacrificing a quarter of the plunder Lord Curzon succeeded in blowing up the American end of the hostile triangle. From now on America is found on the side of the British. Now there remain only the French and the Turks—the position is not so dangerous. And as to settle the utter confusion in the Near East a conference is summoned in Lausanne, the best course in a case where opinions are very divided is to present everybody with a *fait accompli*. Thus in October 1922 British officers led the troops of Feisal into Mosul. With that the stage for the Lausanne conference—the first of that name—is set; the play could begin.

We cannot trace the whole dramatic course of that conference. England and America were arrayed against Turkey and France. The conference began with a minor distraction. The Turks saw themselves faced with a draft treaty which looked remarkably like an ultimatum, and with the acceptance of which—the Turks got five days in which to decide—Turkey admitted the validity of the Bagdad-Mosul oil concessions granted to the Turkish Petroleum Company, the control of which was in English hands. The Turks were furious, but they negotiated. And suddenly during the five days of the ultimatum who appears? Who breaks his flag once again? At the critical moment of the conference Mr. Basil Zaharoff whom, since the fall of his friend Lloyd George, everyone had thought disappeared, ruined, finished, bobs up from his shipwreck as fresh as ever. And it is soon apparent that the old gentleman is neither bankrupt nor beaten. The affair that cost his royal friend Constantine his throne and

life, his ally Lloyd George his career, had cost Mr. Basil Zaharoff only a miserable couple of hundred million francs. Up he comes, slender, alert, and rejuvenated as if he had been away at a health resort. They will have yet to reckon with this young man.

How did he spend the time when he was lying in hiding? We shall not unveil the mystery. At least not yet. At the moment let us be content with this; at the critical moment of the Lausanne Conference he bobbed up again all of a sudden, and, so to say, flung a bomb into the assembly. Let us follow his course, and this is as difficult as negotiating floating ice. Let us glance first at the Press:

Here is the first warning signal in the *Matin*:

Sir Basil Zaharoff is expected in London this week. England should not believe that the danger is over. That would mean that they were underestimating the skill at intrigue of M. Venizelos and the obstinacy of Sir Basil Zaharoff. It cannot be doubted now but that both of them have kept their influence and they will not yield without a desperate fight.

And then this from the *Weekly Dispatch*:

While everybody was searching for Sir Basil Zaharoff the Greek multi-millionaire was staying quietly in London. When we met him on Monday in Piccadilly, any number of people were passing him by and not one recognized him. That shows the mystery in which he moves, although in the crisis in the Near East and in many others his influence was greater than that of most of the statesmen whom everyone knows. This mysterious personage who has had such a significant influence on international policy for twenty years went past the newspaper sellers, who carried bills telling of the latest diplomatic stroke in England of his protégé, Venizelos, without batting an eyelid.

And this from the *Sunday Express*:

The deepest mystery surrounds Sir Basil Zaharoff's comings and goings between London and Paris. No doubt the sinister Greek comes to London "on private business" as one of his

confidants tells us. None the less his private business is the fate of nations, the plans of Governments, and the marching of armies.

Eight days ago M. Venizelos also arrived here "on private business." But a few hours later he was in the Foreign Office, no doubt on some private business of his own. The whole of the London Press has indicated its distrust of this mysterious millionaire and his agent Venizelos. The friends of Sir Basil Zaharoff will be well advised if they succeeded at the last moment in inducing him not to come to London whatever the reason of his journey may be.

Once again this is all a little obscure. What is the game ? We shall be better advised to learn of it from our Greco-French banker Ch., who must have definite information here. Here is a passage from what he said :

Zaharoff did for our Venizelos, he and Lloyd George ! [Then follows what was given earlier in another connection.] And later Constantine was beaten and Lloyd George overthrown ; it went as far as that. When the catastrophe of Smyrna happened Venizelos was in America. He returned at once to Europe and flung into the struggle in London all his patriotism and all his skill in negotiation, so that Greece might not be left in the lurch. He could do nothing to help. Why ? Because Zaharoff stabbed him in the back. *He* didn't care a rap for Greece. To him Greece was only a piece on the board. He bent all his energies to wreck the Lausanne conference so that he might do some fishing in troubled waters. Then Mr. Zaharoff went to and fro between London and Paris and there was the great burst-up at the conference. The Turks would very likely have accepted the British terms, but while the ultimatum period was still running, everything suddenly went wrong. First of all the British told the Turks they would not only have to give up Mosul, but they must hand over the docks and arsenals built on the Bosphorus before the war to the Vickers company. That was Mr. Zaharoff. Secondly, the French declared that the British were sabotaging the occupation of the Ruhr, and Mr. Zaharoff was certainly one of the chief

actors in the Ruhr affair. The Turks naturally were aware of the conflict between France and England, refused the ultimatum, and smashed the conference by withdrawing. Thus Zaharoff, by torpedoing the conference, got what he wanted. Everyone was at daggers drawn with everyone else, and he did fish in troubled waters.

Stay, stay, this is too much to take in all at once ; it makes one's head reel. It is now time to check these allegations. The sudden emergence from shipwreck of Basil Zaharoff and the "feverish activity" he now showed going between London and Paris, seems to be sufficiently documented by the quotations I have given from the Press. The allegations of Ch. regarding Zaharoff's altered attitude to Venizelos and Greece let us leave aside ; perhaps we can clear that up later. But where is the point of contact between that "feverish activity" and the burst-up at Lausanne ? Did Mr. Basil Zaharoff actually torpedo the first Lausanne conference ? At any rate this allegation by Ch. enormously simplifies the story. When Lord Curzon with his demands drove the Turks from the conference—it was not simply a question of Mosul but also of the Straits and other questions—the impenetrable and busy Zaharoff was clearly there, and was able to secure that his claims for the "Docks et Ateliers du Haut-Bosphore" which he had sought in vain to make good for the first time a year ago by means of the Banque de la Méditeranée on the eve of the Greek offensive, should be included among the official demands of Britain. And if Ch.'s story that it was that that wrecked the conference is a little exaggerated, there is a grain of truth in it. One of the messages sent out at the time by the Paris news-agency, Sans-Fil, begins thus :

The question of the renewing of the concession which before the war Turkey had given to the Vickers company for the erection of Turkish docks and the construction of warships was one of the reasons why the first Lausanne conference broke down.

Thus we have succeeded in landing on one piece of firm ground. If its attainment was difficult, what will be much more difficult is the investigation of that assertion by our authority Ch., which, at the first glance, looks a patent fiction, that Zaharoff had directed, or helped to direct, the Ruhr struggle. What is the position there ? How are the cards mixed ? We may remember the "see-saw" of Lloyd George on which the Ruhr and Mosul were set off one against the other. With that there chimes in what is asserted, and above all by German writers, that the French gave their consent to pressure being brought to bear on the Turks at the first Lausanne conference, only on condition that they got a free hand in the Ruhr. But Lord Curzon was not Lloyd George with his policy of live and let live. Lord Curzon went further. If he succeeded in involving all France's strength and attention in the Ruhr then he had a completely free hand in the East. Thus he welcomed the French action in the Ruhr and was interested in seeing that they should be as much involved as possible there. But he had an equally strong interest in seeing that France's strength stayed involved ; that is, that the French occupation of the Ruhr did not attain its end. The logical course, then, was to support not only the French but the Germans. These are the political premises for the explanation of the events of the first months of 1923. The German resistance was supported by skilful support of the mark then reeling into inflation. Whose task was that ? Let us take note. It was the American banking house of Kuhn-Loeb, and then the Standard Oil Company, which as we have seen had made peace with the English, and as a third in the partnership, "British financial circles," as our sources a little mysteriously call them. And whom do we find on the other side, financing the occupation and, according to these sources, especially the Herr Hoffmann whom we have already quoted, inciting the French to that adventure ? First, John Pierpont Morgan, who is the traditional and deadly enemy of Standard Oil, and everywhere

on earth appears on the other side when and wherever Standard Oil bobs up. And, secondly, the Banque de l'Union parisienne. And thus we have come back to our old friend Zaharoff again. Union parisienne—that is his last concealed position in France. If we were arguing rightly, it was inevitable that we should meet him again. And now let us see what our sworn helper Ch. can tell us :

The connections of the American Morgan group reached to the Banque de l'Union parisienne. In the winter of 1922–23 this bank provided the financial preparation for the occupation of the Ruhr. Meantime Standard Oil, which was in touch with French officialdom through the Banque de Paris et des Pay-Bas, worked in the direction of appeasement.

It may appear contradictory that the Banque de l'Union parisienne, an oil bank under British guidance, should be financing the French invasion of the Ruhr, although certain sections in the financial circles in London, because of Eastern and oil-political considerations, according to all the evidence, took action to support on the world market the German effort to maintain the mark. Thus, through this double relationship of a French financing of the military action and the German financing of passive resistance, both parties were caught in the toils so that France with the Ruhr war was ever more deeply tied up in Germany.

But now when an understanding had been reached in the Near Eastern conflicts between the British and American oil interests by the secret agreement on Mesopotamia [the Cadman treaty], the Ruhr issue had to be liquidated. Therefore London finance strove for a compromise between the Morgan group and the banking section of the Standard oligarchy. Sir Basil Zaharoff, the tried agent of London finance in the Banque de l'Union parisienne, then went off to the United States in order to get "a conclusion of peace" between the two American rivals in understanding with English finance.

What, then, happened according to this account ? Lord Curzon had got the Americans on his side. As a result he was able

to break up the Franco-Turkish alliance and isolate the Turks, while he kept the French involved in the Ruhr—and Basil Zaharoff had forced himself into the game and had a hand in it on both sides, the French and also the German. Why? There were plenty of reasons. If Mr. Zaharoff supported the Mosul policy of Lord Curzon, he was furthering his own oil interests. And if the Banque de l'Union and Schneider-Creusot helped the occupation of the Ruhr, Mr. Zaharoff was a partner to the business. And if the Germans offered resistance—aye, what about this alleged influence on Germany? Let us say just a word on that; there is something we must explain.

The preference of the Levantine for any sort of "confusion" is no novelty to us. We have only to remember how he paid for getting that railway in Eastern Asia. And if on general principles there is always something to be made out of confusion, what could not be made out of the confusion when a nation has been laid desperately low and so is striving towards a new national awakening, a Great Power has been deprived of all its armaments and its armament factories levelled to the ground? What a market there to conquer, what a super-dimensional business to be got, if it is possible so to stir up national feeling that a complete and new rearmament would be demanded—you can realize all that that meant from the figures of arms deliveries made by the German State under the Versailles Treaty:

Aeroplanes	14,014
Aeroplane motors	27,757
Armoured monitors	4
Battleships and armoured cruisers	26
Small cruisers	19
Training and special vessels	21
Torpedo-boats	83
Submarines	315
Powder—tons	37,000
Rifles	6,000,000

Machine-guns	107,000
Mortars	83,000
Shrapnel ready for use	38,750,000
Artillery munitions not ready for use—tons ..	332,000
Shells	16,500,000
Cartridges	473,000,000

The dream of an armaments king—to be present when re-armament on such a scale was to take place. The days are over when Carl von Ossietzky was beaten half dead and given an opportunity to acquire his last illness in German prisons for mentioning German rearmament. Ossietzky lives no longer, and the present rulers of Germany have taken to boasting of what was once solemnly denied. So the Germans *did* rearm in those years. As for Zaharoff, we can merely say that the psychological conditions for his intervention were certainly present. How far he took these conditions into consideration is debatable. We should not presume to say, and will bring forward merely two witnesses. That special number of the *Crapouillot*—"Les Marchands de Canons"—which we have quoted before and which, besides, is not anti-German, says :

The Hitler movement was financed not only by Hugenberg, who dealt out the subsidies of the heavy industry, but also by Pintsch, a Berlin firm controlled by Vickers, who from the very first had an agent at Hitler's headquarters.

If that is right, then we should have a direct link with Mr. Zaharoff, though an indirect one *via* the Vickers' subsidiary, Pintsch. Then—which reveals the line of attack of Zaharoff–Schneider–Banque de l'Union parisienne-Skoda (the last-named company belonged, or 56 per cent. of it at least, to the interests behind it which we have just named)—here is a quotation from an article by Kaisaroff in the *Krasnaya Gazeta* :

Under the direction of German engineers Skoda in Pilsen are building tanks of the latest type, and it is a curious circumstance that this new type of tank which, it is alleged,

is being constructed for Sweden, is eminently more suited to German land conditions.

But it is very possible that these sources are coloured by political bias. The last statement certainly makes interesting reading to-day, in the light of the German threat to Czechoslovakia. But what we have so far brought forward as evidence for the activity in the rearming of Germany of Mr. Zaharoff and his industries, whose rôle was doubted some while ago and is now notorious, are merely indications and do not amount to proof. But what can one say about the next document? We may remember that Agence Radio which was founded by Zaharoff in the war years to work on public opinion in Greece, and which, as we have shown in connection with the action against Krupp, had to some extent become estranged from its founder who had withdrawn his subsidy. In 1923—that is, at the time of the Ruhr war—this estrangement process seems to have reached completion, for here we make this rather piquant discovery among the messages sent out by this agency which Zaharoff founded:

To whom were the munitions on board the *Varsovie* consigned by the Vickers company?

London, November 29th.—Mr. Paget Walford of the big shipowning company of Leopold Walford, the owners of the British steamer *Varsovie*, on board which it has been ascertained were munitions consigned to a German port, to-day stated that the munitions had been consigned by the Vickers company and with the sanction of the British authorities; he himself had not been told the final destination of the cargo and had thought that it was Russia. The consignees, the Vickers company, refused to give any information.

To which we can add that Mr. Walford, the owner of the vessel, is known as the son-in-law of the Duchess of Villafranca.

Lord Curzon's idea of tying France up in the Ruhr in order to have a free hand himself in the East was taken up by

Mr. Zaharoff and his colleagues, true to those methods of his, with such complete success that during the first months of 1923 Turkey was isolated and helpless, faced with the three united Anglo-Saxon Great Powers, the United States, Zaharoff, and Britain.

All that remained now was to destroy Turkey—now fully at their mercy—or to bring her into the fairway of British policy. Now the Levantine threw himself with all his might on this new stage, an old one for him, and one where still was a reckoning to be paid. How did he go to work? Read this telegram from London in the *Matin*:

The Turkish Press has just announced that "the mystery man of Europe" is arming for a new war. According to it the Greeks are making all preparations to resume hostilities in Eastern Thrace. The *Tewid Efkiar* announces that Sir Basil has bought 150,000 rifles, which have been shipped to Salonica and will shortly be sent up to the front. The same paper learns from Athens that Zaharoff has got money from members of the Greek colony in Paris. The great banker has let M. Venizelos know that he is ready to support financially a revolutionary Government in Athens.

That is enough. Our hero arms the Greeks for more trouble in Thrace; once again, although the blood-bath of Smyrna took place only a few months ago, they must march against the Turks. Good, they may well serve to scare the now isolated Kemal and make him more amenable to the British Mosul policy. But the last line of the message—what does that mean? A revolutionary Government? Does Mr. Zaharoff want to have a revolutionary movement in Greece? We should like to hear more about that before we give it credence—from the other side, as a precaution, from Belgrade:

The centre of the republican movement is Salonica. At the head of the movement are Venizelos and the former commander of the Greek Army in Thrace, General Pangalos, and

also Admiral Hadjikiriakis. In Salonica and Western Thrace it is feared that there may be an armed clash between the republican and the royalist regiments. The republican movement is financed by the Greek bankers, Zaharoff and Benakis.

At least the message does not lack precision. Once again Mr. Zaharoff is financing a Greek revolution. To make our bewilderment about these alleged revolutionary intentions of Mr. Zaharoff in Greece intelligible we must deal a little more fully with that mysterious disappearance of the gentleman with the imperial at the end of 1922, when, as we may remember, Lloyd George fell and Greece was in distress. Where did he hide himself, where was he? In those days Mr. Zaharoff was staying, fêted and surrounded by the throng, as a guest at the Court of Bucarest. There is here a statement by Baroness P. (who told us about Zaharoff's state of mind in the days when the war broke out) which is as follows: When he heard the news of the destruction of the Greek Army and the massacre of untold numbers of his fellow-countrymen in Anatolia, Zaharoff went through one of the gravest crises of his life. He tore his hair, he cried aloud his grief to heaven, physically he was on the point of collapse. But, to name only one, there is the contrary witness of the Greek diplomatist G., who was then stationed in Bucarest and could see at close quarters how untroubled, to all outward appearance at least, Mr. Zaharoff lived through these tragic days. Vickers' agent was not staying in any case in Bucarest for pleasure. The Rumanian currency had crashed even worse than any of the other unstable Balkan currencies. And if, in spite of his adventure in Asia Minor, the aged and powerful visitor was fêted at the Bucarest Court it was because he came with a full pocket-book. He granted a loan to the State; for him it was a matter only of three million pounds sterling, for the Roumanians one of two thousand million lei, and that is an atronomical figure. At the same time Vickers obtained a considerable share in the Reschitza, the biggest undertaking of the Roumanian heavy industry.

It is also certain that, besides external loans and participation in the heavy industry, other brews were concocted. The Queen of Roumania—but we like Lewinsohn's way of telling stories of this sort:

Zaharoff was spoiled at the Court. The queen who knew so well how to make the best display of her majestic beauty was particularly attentive to the guest. She moved like a queen in her private apartments, and when she played her favourite trick, and in so gracious a manner strewed a mysterious powder on the fireplace from which a fantastic firework was conjured up, the seventy-year-old Sir Basil could not free himself from the charm of this atmosphere. The eyes of the queen shone like stars. Bucarest had a charming Court and the interest on the loan seemed adequate.

In short, what was going on was an attempt to seduce Mr. Zaharoff into intervening on behalf of the Greek royal family. Dynasties are all keen on propping up their thrones. To compass the fall of tyrants is an infectious game for the peoples. What I do for you I do for myself. And the eldest daughter of the Roumanian king and queen was, since Constantine had gone, Queen of Greece. In the present state of feeling in Athens no one knew whether to-morrow the new King George would have to follow the track of his luckless father across the frontier. In such a case only the powers that were could help in Greece, and there the powers that were were—Zaharoff.

What can we think? Did the old man, thronged with the most pressing world-political cares, take upon himself this little private matter which almost savours of an old world of gallantry, and promised to do something for the legitimist cause in Greece *pour les beaux yeux d'une reine*? Or was he once again the old fox and began his fresh intervention in the affairs of Greece for reasons which are different but which we cannot at present fathom, because intervention was part of the new idea? We are the less able to decide since barely a month later it was very obvious that the very opposite

happened in Greece of what Mr. Zaharoff had promised in Bucarest. So will he now really finance a Venizelos *putsch* in Athens? Precisely that *putsch* which Queen Marie of Roumania dreaded so much, and against which she asked and thought she had obtained Zaharoff's help? Who will explain all this? For the last time let us quote from our conversations with the banker Ch.:

I. You said before that it was clear that Zaharoff simply made game of Venizelos and the cause of Greece.

HE. Of course. Zaharoff let himself be caught by Marie of Roumania. At first Venizelos went on believing him an honourable gentleman and thought that he would help them to drive out the dynasty, Constantine's brood, from Athens. But one day our friend Zaharoff invited Venizelos to Monte Carlo. That was in the early summer of 1923. And there suddenly Zaharoff asked him to leave the freedom movement in the lurch and submit to King George.

I. And Venizelos?

HE. Gave him the right answer. You beast, he said to him, you —(here followed a series of injurious epithets from Homer).

I. Did Venizelos relate all this?

HE. That's of no consequence. Anyway, he tore up all the bonds that were between them. They never met again. But Zaharoff really wasn't bothering at all about Queen Marie and the fate of the Greek royal house. He was bothering about this only, that Greece should remain rent by faction so that it would continue to be of no account in international politics.

I. Why?

HE. Greece was becoming a nuisance. He was looking for a chance to get rid of Greece. Smyrna and the Sakkaria and all that, and once again he let her down.

I. And why so?

HE. Who can tell with a man like him. Perhaps because he wanted to get an agreement with the Turks.

I. And why that ?
HE. Again no one knows. Because of oil very likely.

Here the conversation with the aged and easily roused banker Ch. ends. Let it be admitted that his account of the conflict and break between Venizelos and Zaharoff at that meeting in Monte Carlo does not only pretty well agree with the account given by the ex-Premier D.—he, too, of course, was a Venizelist—but also in a very notable way with the account given by Lewinsohn, obviously inspired from Greek monarchist circles *via* Skuludis. In any case we must from now on consider Messrs. Zaharoff and Venizelos as enemies. Zaharoff had provoked the rupture in order to abandon Greece with some show of decency, and be able then to try to reach an understanding with the Turks in the matter of Mosul oil. That is as clear as anything can be in politics. Zaharoff had not acted to please M. Venizelos nor to please Queen Marie. For him the Greek adventure was liquidated.

Let us return now to the Press and read a telegram from London :

MYSTERIOUS LUNCH IN LONDON, SIR BASIL ZAHAROFF AMONG THE GUESTS

On Friday, in one of the most exclusive hotels in the capital, there was a mysterious luncheon party, which has not failed to cause some excitement in oil industrial circles.

Although the staff of the hotel did their utmost to keep out journalists and Press photographers, it was learned that this lunch, over which one of the directors of Anglo-Persian Oil, Sir Charles Greenway, presided, was held, that ten City magnates were present, and that the guest of honour was none other than Sir Basil Zaharoff.

For various reasons Venizelos could not be present at this lunch. In the first place, the presence of the Greek Premier would have given the lunch a political character—which no doubt it did not possess. Besides, at the moment Venizelos,

who cannot be in two places at once, is in Monte Carlo, where he is watching the interests of his master.

Another of the guests was quite a young man, the only son of the Armenian multi-millionaire Gulbenkian, the "Zaharoff of the Royal Dutch Shell Corporation."

Now here we get into the right path. That M. Venizelos for a variety of reasons—not necessarily for those given above —was unfortunately unable to be present need not surprise us. And now let us run over the list of guests and we know where we are. The Greek problem is out of the way. The course is set—full steam ahead to Mosul; a blind man could see that. Thanks to a masterly strategy the whole affair has become marvellously simplified. The wind is favourable and everyone is just in the right mood. The nets are let down; the catch is as good as on board.

But here, on the eve of triumph, in this plundering raid which is perhaps the boldest and biggest in modern economic history, we are confronted with the last riddle of Basil Zaharoff's meteoric career. On the day on which this mysterious and most promising lunch was held in London this telegram appeared in the *Matin*:

SIR BASIL ZAHAROFF SUDDENLY RETURNS TO PARIS

The Greek multi-millionaire, Basil Zaharoff, whose presence in London has been so eagerly canvassed, this morning suddenly returned to Paris as mysteriously as he went to London some days ago.

And suddenly we are at the end. Nothing more appears in the Press—nothing. Everything goes to show that suddenly Zaharoff let the reins fall from his hands. We are writing of May 15, 1923. Note the date, for it will be mentioned again in a very different connection. We may reveal the truth now; at this point the old man's feet leave abruptly the main streets of great cities and turn into a quiet private road; at the con-

ference of Lausanne, the second and last, everything went according to the political ideas of Mr. Bonar Law and according to the commercial-strategic ideas of Mr. Zaharoff and his friends, but there is no trace at all of any personal intervention of his at the conference. In this the most furious of all the races in economic history the old man's horse passed the post first, but he was not there to lead it in. He was not present; once again he was somewhere else.

We can summarize it all thus. The swansong of this Alexander expedition of a gentleman from Tatavla is as heroic, as cunning, as brutal as befits the occasion and the person, the adventure and the adventurer. With the beginning of the new conference of Lausanne the Reichsmark which, for very good reason, had been so well supported in the previous months began again to fall. The support of the mark and so of the German resistance in the Ruhr had fulfilled its purpose. Now that the ship had as good as come to port and the Turks isolated and as good as tamed, now that Mr. Zaharoff from caprice, or God knows why, had withdrawn into private life, the continuance of the Franco-German adventure had lost its point. It was agreed to liquidate it and to let the *grande nation* have something of a victory in the Ruhr. So disinterest was decreed in the mark; already it was gliding slowly but surely to the abyss—surely, but only slowly, for during the conference the French had still to be held in check. The Turks alleged that in Mosul, apart from those minorities who in spite of all deportations and massacres had somehow in some mysterious manner contrived to go on existing, there lived 281,000 Kurds, 146,000 Turks, and 43,000 Arabs; and as the Kurds were of Turanian stock and therefore just as good as Turks, the percentage of the population as far as race went was 85 per cent. in favour of the Turks. But the British had ascertained that in Mosul there were 454,000 Kurds, 185,000 Arabs, and only 65,000 Turks. And, according to English scholars, the Kurds were not of Turanian but of Iranian stock.

So that the percentage of Turks in the Mosul area was not 85 but 8 per cent. Britain and Turkey were conjured to get together and settle *in camera caritatis* these little differences of opinion. With that solution the conference ended. It is dated July 24, 1923. The Reichsmark, now a matter of no political interest at all, and completely abandoned, a few days later went over into the abyss and down to a bottomless pit.

There remains only to report that Kemal Pasha committed the usual fault of a national dictator and quarrelled with his clergy. In March 1924 he abolished the caliphate. Thereby a conflict with Turkey, now in this way, too, isolated, held no danger for England in the Pan-Islamite sense. It was possible now to risk letting the projected understanding over Mosul fail. And when England was unable to come to an agreement with the Turks, the League of Nations at the end of 1924 sent a commission of three to Mosul to investigate on the spot what was the real position with regard to the minorities problem and whether the Kurds were to be considered Turanian or Iranian or something else.

And here there occurred an incident which we must chronicle before we close this history of the oil-war. In the last days of January the three gentlemen sent by the League arrived in Mosul, and at the end of the first week in February there broke out—a revolt of the Kurds against the Turks. A religious, nationalist, conservative movement against westernizing Angora. And fourteen days later the rebels made themselves over to a son of the dead Abdul Hamid, one of the protégés of Mr. Untermeyer, who, on the ground of that exalted connection, claimed the vilayet of Mosul—and its oil, and this ambitious prince was now in all haste proclaimed King of Kurdistan. There is no doubt about it; there everyone uses double thread for weaving. First of all, Mosul belongs to the Kurds who have long been settled there, who have obviously agreed to accept the doctrine of the British scholars and to be Iranian and not Turanian by origin. Next Mosul

belongs to the Kurds, not only on the ground that they live there but first and doubly rightly because of the claims of heritage put forward by the king hastily elected for that reason. As against these legitimist claims Kemal Pasha is a mere usurper. There remains the pertinent question, Who is at the back of all this ? Who pulls the strings so masterfully before the eyes of the League's commission ?

And then on March 11th there appears in a report from Constantinople for the first time this sentence :

Here there is a general tendency to ascribe the origin of the rebellion to British instigation.

And then—at last :

Letters have been found addressed to the Kurdish Ministry of War. They were sent by a foreign armaments maker.

And here it seems we have come again to Mr. Zaharoff. Once again, but for the last time in this world conflict over the oil of Mesopotamia, there rises from a clouded background the profile of this old man, his imperial now all white. Once again, but for the last time, it seems that his bony fingers have been mixing the cards of national destinies. And as he was now at the end of it all, the world war for oil was also at an end. France, England, Germany, America, and also Greeks, Turks, Arabs, Druses, and Kurds. He was now seventy-six and he looked upon all that he had made and he saw that it was horrible.

But now what really had happened ? That that "foreign armaments maker" was none other than Sir Basil Zaharoff is alleged by our Turkish authority and bearer of the famous name of E., by our very reliable witness Ro., by the well-informed Otto Lehmann-Russbueldt in his *Blutige Internationale der Ruestungsindustrie*, by the *Biographisches Archiv.* of Berlin, and by several newspapers. But no proof is brought forward and I have not succeeded in getting more than an

indication or two that it may be true. The question whether the old man really came out again or not, or whether it was one of the younger men, one of his pupils in mystery—there is no answer to that last question.

Back to our history. The oil-political significance of the Kurdish revolt was revealed a few days later—on March 15th. On that day Reuter reported from Bagdad:

A convention which will remain in force for seventy-five years was signed yesteday between the Turkish Petroleum Company and the Government of Irak. It concerns the petrol output of that country, and provides for the building of a pipe line to the Mediterranean. The participation of the Turkish Petroleum Company will be shared equally with the four interested groups with a combined capital of £1,000,000,000 sterling, viz. the Anglo-Persian Oil Co., the Royal Dutch Shell Corporation, seven of the chief American companies, including the Standard Oil Co., and sixty-five French companies. The convention provides that a British subject will always be chairman.

The battle thus was over. That is the oil peace of Mosul. France and America, too, have succeeded in swallowing a morsel. Thus for the affairs of Mr. Zaharoff the peace of Mosul had ended a victorious war. But at this conclusion of peace, his name is not mentioned.

Simultaneously with the rising of the Kurds against the Turks, in the first days of March the Druses rose against the French. They showed themselves to be very well armed, and with Vickers' products, too, although it could not be definitely established whence they came. But now when, on March 15th, peace was declared between the Great Powers, Kurds and Druses ceased to be of interest and their efforts at independence, religious and national, only a nuisance. Both were bloodily crushed. The Kurds by the Turks, the Druses by the French, in which latter enterprise the British very kindly aided. On Christmas Day, 1925, on the grounds supplied by the com-

mission which had studied the questions on the spot, the League decided to whom would fall the Mosul area. But even if there never had been a Kurdish rising, the gentlemen in Geneva were confronted, through the conclusion of the oil peace by the Great Powers, with a *fait accompli*. We have heard that the powers who thereby had come to an agreement represented one thousand million pounds sterling. There was no authority on earth which would undertake anything against that figure. So on that Christmas Day, 1925, the League of Nations let the Turks down and assigned Mosul to Irak.

The final notes of the swansong :

At the beginning of 1926 the Turks resolved that they would not be let down, and that they would make war against England. That was the time when Chamberlain, in answer to Ponsonby's question, said that the Turks could be rearmed in complete security, for a war on the part of Turkey against England was impossible to imagine. Possibly he was not altogether wrong, for he knew already the British countermove. There is in Asia Minor a pretty little province called Cilicia, the same province as Lloyd George at the Paris conference mixed up with Sicily, according to one version of the story, and with Silesia according to another. In order to tie the hands of the bellicose Turks the British promised Cilicia . . . but we shall not take the responsibility for this statement. The assertion comes from France and from Henry de Jouvenel, who is no Anglophil :

At the beginning of the year 1926, when the decision of the League of Nations on Mosul nearly produced an Anglo-Turkish war, Britain offered Cilicia to Italy as a bait. I was at that time as High Commissioner for Syria on a visit to Angora. Personally I have not the slightest doubt that the understanding which was then reached between Britain and the Turkish Government was due to the fear of the Turks that the Italians would land in Cilicia. The Turks accordingly gave way to Britain and the Italians found their hopes of adventure deluded.

It remains, too, to record that the new partners of Mosul, the signatories to the final peace of Mosul, soon fell to squabbling. The cause of the dispute was the route the pipe-line should take to the Mediterranean. France wanted it to go through Syria; Britain insisted on a long detour south so as to go through a British protectorate. America remained neutral. After squabbling for years agreement was reached. The pipe-line, now completed and in operation, leads westwards from Mosul to the Irak frontier. There it divides; one branch goes to French Syria, the other to British Palestine. As the dispute was fought out on Biblical soil a Solomonic solution was entirely appropriate.

One word over the plunder secured in this world war, and a word, too, on the oil of Mosul to exploit which that one thousand million pounds activity was set in motion, for which Kings and Ministers were overthrown, treaties concluded and treaties torn up, for which a man from Tatavla, year after year of his old age, fought like a warrior of old and for which half a dozen nations in blind heroism and under flags that they did not see sent their young men to die on the battlefield. After a great initial success, after the loud prophecies of the engineers, after the fine hopes, especially in France, quiet slowly descended on the oil of Mosul. The reports on output are contradictory. Some say that there a sea of oil awaits release, and that its release is only delayed for market and price-control reasons; others say that the productive value of the Mesopotamian fields has fallen far short of the original estimates. The future will show which account is the right one. And if those are right who say that the sea of oil does not even exist? Then once again a world war will have been fought about nothing.

No, not about nothing. Here we may quote the letter of a certain Vahan Cardashian, the plenipotentiary of the delegation of the Republic of Armenia, to the United States Senator Borah:

I make the charge that two members of the President's Cabinet used the cause of the Armenians at the Lausanne conference as a matter for barter and entered into a conspiracy the result of which was that for a share in the oil of Mosul nearly a million Armenians were driven from their homes and that now intrigues are on foot to get the oil fields in the region these victims had left. I make the charge that these men and their accomplices have used the Foreign Office as their willing tool in this iniquity and are still using it to carry out their nefarious designs. A Government which has surrendered America's legitimate rights and has then been so shameless as to fill the air with false data, rumours, and lies, in order to divert the attention of the public from their scandalous machinations—such a Government, I say, will not hesitate and has not hesitated, for the sake of a pair of its protégés and for petrol, to sacrifice our Armenian nation and our fatherland.

So we have to add a million Armenians to the score; we had nearly overlooked them. In that letter it is all a question of America and Armenia ; there is no mention in it of Mr. Basil Zaharoff. The fate of a thousand thousand Armenians massacred or otherwise sent to the devil, blood for oil, profit and loss, will have to be entered to the account of other gentlemen. All that interests us no longer. Our work as an oil-detective is finished.

VI

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF AN OLD GENTLEMAN

BUT now, when Sir Basil Zaharoff, just before he attained his end, had confused the trail and disappeared from the dusty highways and turned aside into a sandy, palm-shaded private road, his hair white, leaning on his stick, yet as upright as ever, as befits one who has companioned with death—now let us once again look at him, our child of fortune. Has he at last really reached that point of time which is called for mortal men the evening of their days? We have a suspicion that in that meteoric career of his, in that dizzy ascent he has forgotten, has overlooked one thing, for one thing he has never had time: life itself. What of life now? Now while he strolls along that private road he has leisure and time to think it all over.

Where did we last see him living the life of a private individual? It was after the World War which, after a slight and soon finished struggle, with the strength of a robust and unclouded conscience, he lived through and at the end of which he was one of the most powerful and possibly one of the richest men in the world, a symbol and ripe to become a legend. He has collected orders and titles; he has endowed chairs at universities and war hospitals; he is "the great philanthropist" as he was called in the caption to that picture of Miss Yvonne Zaharoff. Do not smile at that honourable description. A saying of his in these days has come down to us. It was said to his friend O'Connor: "Whenever I spend money I think how best I can spend it to the advantage of my fellow-men." And do not smile at that either. If it was a jest, it was a terrible jest. But he said it quite seriously, and that calm seriousness is perhaps more terrible still. "Would that all Kings and Ministers had as easy a conscience as I," as Emil Ludwig makes him say in that scene which we quoted. Mr.

Zaharoff spends his money. He does not spend it only on chairs for universities, seamen's homes, a prize for literature. He spends it on poor children. He spends two hundred thousand francs so that the French athletes can take part in the Olympic contests at Amsterdam. He gives money for a clinic for infectious diseases in Athens. He gives to the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Paris, to build Greek Legations, to the football club of Tatavla, to the Russian royalists, to the Paris Zoo, for the securing of a valuable Mozart MS., and for a silly photograph album which has been put up for auction for charitable purposes by the singer Melba. And all that is done so purposefully, so carefully planned, even in the most private things, that even romance in his life takes a form which in others would be business. Think only of that romantic hate, that Oedipus-hate of his Turkish fatherland to which the last curve of that spiral staircase has brought him back in his old age. Thus he runs his life's race at once passionate, romantic, and prudent, hunter and hunted in one, with the whip of childhood misery at his back—gatherer of power, gatherer of money, collector of titles, confidant of queens, and friend through life of a grandee of Spain. Aye, one is never done with the lady of the three and thirty names, with that Maria del Pilar Antonia Angela Patrocinio Simona de Miguero y Beruete, the Duchess. It is a lifetime, more than a lifetime, since the advanturer, the Casanova of St. Petersburg, the man with the gaudy ties, met the hapless lady. And as his relation to this woman was at the beginning of the career of Sir Basil Zaharoff, so it is at the end. That is the last and boldest turn of all. Behind guns and petrol, behind millions of wrecked lives and millions in gold, behind battles on the Bourse and triumphs of wire-pulling the last story of this man is a love-story. The most ordinary and at the same time the most romantic love-story, equal to the nature of this man in its every detail and to the greatness of the shadow which he cast on the globe. We have to tell it now.

Or rather, we have to tell its sequel, for we know its beginning. A man of forty, an adventurer with a more than shady past, meets this newly wed cousin of the Spanish Bourbon kings ; and he who in his younger years had made profit out of human passions and perhaps out of his own passion, sees this passing connection with a woman delivered into those clutching hands of his, the hands of a master, slip from the control of his cool will and turn into love. He seeks to stay, to possess, this man who knows at what he aims ; he will all and for ever and before all eyes and in conformity with those bourgeois laws which he has so despised and so often outraged be the wedded husband of this stranger from a strange world. We know how this bourgeois romantic dream faded. The pious Catholic would not hear of a divorce. The Bourbon husband, the sickly, late-born scion of a worn-out stock became insane and disappeared behind the walls of a Spanish asylum. But the light of life flickered in him and would not be quenched. He did not die. And so what was at first the bold adventure became toned down from bourgeois romantic hopes to the careful reasonable life of every day. The woman, the duchess, was not free. But she could follow the friend of her choice abroad, year after year, on his journeys to that south coast of France which became full of memory for him because of these half-mysteries of a communion that has ever to be won again, to be fought for, and becomes ever dearer. But the light of that madman's life—it went on flickering. So the years passed. What happened in the meantime? Wars, and conspiracies, lust of power and greed of gain, obstinate silence and the cruel trampling of the vanquished, we have tried to establish. Also that the Spanish lady gave birth to three daughters ; we remember the photograph which in the best years of his life was taken in an idle moment from the morocco pocket-book of a certain gentleman. Meantime they have become girls and then women. The names of their husbands still come up to us from the din and turmoil of

armaments conflicts and battles in Board rooms. The din and turmoil are stilled ; the flames are burned out. The young ladies, children of such widely different parents, meantime have passed on into their own lives. One died, two live. But the man from Tatavla and the Spanish duchess wait. For the light of life of that madman behind barred windows—it still flickers.

We know this hidden tragedy of a life, reeling drunk with successes, victories, conquests, only so far as it peeps out here and there from behind these successes, victories, conquests. We know this much, that the conqueror and his beloved must have become old in it, very old. And now when the flames have burned out and all the victories are won, we see these two greyhaired old people, man and woman, with the loyalty of romantic love and all the tenacity of the old, holding fast to the marriage plans of their youth, always holding to them, always, even on the edge of death. It seems as if it was something that did not fit in in the mathematics of our meteor. Thou canst Helen possess or gold ; never both. And so it is just this which fills the mind of this man of mystery, this dealer in the deaths of men still at the height of his career, of his power, of his wealth, and will not let him rest. So long as this man from the poor quarter of Constantinople is not in his sense worthy of the Spanish duchess, so long as he cannot possess her and so give to her that which in spite of all that madman possessed and could have given her, so long life is not life. For that reason, and not to serve his robber-career, did he collect orders and titles. For that and not because of the chance of a bargain did he buy castles and palaces everywhere in the land. It is the secret royal dream of a boy which stirs in the brain of a greybeard. And now when the heights are reached and the dark bourne possibly is not very far away, it will be transformed into reality with all the tenacity and cunning of a Levantine reckoner, with all the daring of a potentate who has nothing more to fear in the world. Now that we have tracked down so much we will not let ourselves be

worn out until we have followed to its end this last business deal of Mr. Basil Zaharoff.

It is, first of all, not more than a queer business, a real Zaharoff affair. So far you have only been allowed to see the end of it attained, when one day you saw Sir Basil appear as the owner of the casino of Monte Carlo. But the transaction is essentially something very different and more human than just a belated return to his old game of a foreigner's guide, to the "gambling dens" of his youth. The gist of the matter is simply this, that on the occasion of the partitioning of the globe in 1918, very privately and for personal reasons only, Zaharoff bought himself a principality.

A word on history. Here is the so-called Principality of Monaco—so-called, for since the Treaty of Peronne in 1641 it is a part of France, and nothing was left to its prince, a Grimaldi, but a semblance of sovereignty. A French garrison was quartered upon him, and the prince was called its "capitaine et gouverneur," and wore a uniform, but was commanded, really commanded from Paris. Still, a few private rights were preserved to the prince. And it was in virtue of one of them that in 1862 a concession was granted for the founding of a casino in Monte Carlo to a former waiter named François Blanc, who had risen to be a casino manager in Bad Homburg. This casino soon developed into a most lucrative business, one of the most lucrative in the world, and remained so even after the death of its founder. Then the profits flowed into five pockets, for the three sons of François associated with them in the casino, two sons-in-law, both noblemen, a Prince Radziwill and a Prince Bonaparte. But then the ex-Empress Eugenie raised a protest against this Bonaparte venture into partnership, and the family property was turned into a company, and of the three sons and two sons-in-law there remained only one in the business, as president of the company, Camille Blanc. As president, be it said, not only of the company; he is *de facto* president of the State; he is the absolute monarch and

uncrowned ruler of the principality whose prince even in this domain is now reduced to a semblance of sovereignty. But this complete deposition is almost as good a bit of business for the prince as the casino was for the Blanc family. For who pays the taxes for the twenty thousand citizens of this community? The casino, i.e. M. Blanc. Who pays the police, the judges, the army, who pays for the public works? The casino, i.e. M. Blanc. Aye, who pays the insatiable ruling prince himself, his civil list, as well as his numerous special desires and special pleasures from a huge automobile to a little outer fort at the harbour? The casino, i.e. M. Blanc. M. Blanc pays everything. It costs something to be ruler of this land over the ruler. And he found the bill always there. So long it went on until the Great War proved a little too powerful a competitor for the great industry of pleasure, and business dwindled, and until Grimaldi, who liked his civil list, began to be a little displeased with his paymaster. That was in the summer of 1918. And then a cloud appeared. A cloud which was to be the cause of a slight change in the situation. The cloud once again was called Mr. Basil Zaharoff. He was sixty-nine now, and well on the way to become one of the real winners of a war which was as good as won, possessed of power and titles, and of more good gold than ever a living man had been able to get together. Where did he live when he was not on business in Paris or London, and helping to direct a World War? He had a country house at Beaulieu on the blue sea coast which was very comforting to a lady from Spain. Did she want life, did she have a yearning to get out of the quiet prison of the park for a little amusement, they went over to Monte Carlo and signed their names like everyone else in the visitors' book in the casino and enjoyed seeing these madmen from all over the world getting skinned in the magnificent hall decorated in the Western style, skinned in the good old Tatavla way. He was no fool this François Blanc, who erected this snare for humanity. And if Mr. Zaharoff had not by chance

become a maker of guns he would have liked well to be a croupier. Occasionally he said so among his intimates; they laughed and the Spanish lady, too, laughed, deep down in her throat, that laugh that even now, so many years after, went straight to his heart.

That went on until one day in the early summer of 1918 the thought suddenly came up against reality. A certain Count Balny d'Avricourt called upon him, the Minister of His Highness the Prince of Monaco, the prince who was discontented with his paymaster and who as one great man to another cautiously broached the matter of whether and how far. But no, it was here that the cloud came over the scene. When it had passed, at least one treaty had been evolved. A secret option. Mr. Basil Zaharoff was to be able, at a date still to be fixed by him, to get possession of the casino of Monte Carlo, and show the sons and sons-in-law of the ingenious M. François Blanc the door. When that would happen, how it would happen, how much good money passed from one pocket to the other on this occasion—that is wrapped in mystery. And only this much is certain, that Mr. Basil Zaharoff, even at this first encounter with his Riviera neighbour, must have discussed more than the casino, in fact how, *via* the casino, to get control of the prince who was so desirous of cash. And *via* the prince of the principality. For that is precisely what the man from Tatavla did not yet possess and what he for the sake of these constant dreams and secret needs of life of his must still conquer, occupy, possess: a principality for a woman.

How far Albert, Prince of Monaco, had a look at the cards held by his dangerous but obliging partner we do not know. Whether he (and his Minister) was innocent enough not to see what the game was, or whether he did see and shrugging his shoulders like a gentleman saw also a chance to get rid of his tiresome gilded throne at last and in compensation to have for the rest of a princely life, which he hoped would be long and which needed much money, ample means and freedom from care;

here, too, it is not possible to speak definitely. This alone is certain, that from that day forth the prince was obedient as a lamb to the instructions of the Levantine. And therein he did not do unwisely from the point of view of prestige.

For scarcely was the secret treaty between Mr. Zaharoff and the throne of Monaco arranged when that crown received a completely unexpected accession of power and elevation. What was this Monaco with its semblance of sovereignty? Just a province of France. For two centuries the House of Grimaldi had in vain tried to prevent it being just so. But now when a certain gentleman from the Levant takes an interest in the business, things take a different turn. Now for the first time for a quarter of a millennium, notes of state of a Monegasque prince which were buried in the offices and archives of Paris began to move. For this gentleman from the Levant cannot carry out his plans unless this prince is sovereign and can really and without first obtaining the blessing of Paris dispose of crown and country.

In Paris there was in power a man who maintained intimate and close relations with the man from Tatavla—M. Georges Clemenceau. And there actually happened this extraordinary thing, that in the middle of the World War this M. Clemenceau on July 17, 1918, without any apparent occasion for it, concluded a treaty with the Prince of Monaco, which said that from now on Monaco was once again to be considered a sovereign principality according to law. Still more surprising and, for those who are not acquainted with the private history I have related, still more incomprehensible than the apparent inconsequence of this surrender of a territory lying close to the ever-sensitive Italian frontier—and that in the middle of a war—is the circumstance that this treaty was kept rigidly secret. Until in 1919, for of course it had to be made public some time, it was revealed—quite casually, unnoticed except by some specialists, and if one may use the phrase, printed in very small type—and in the Treaty of Versailles. There it

lay buried in Part XV, Article 436, among so many highly important parts and articles that it was not easy to find it. And if it were discovered it was easy to give the Press a hint to pass over Article 436 in silence. But there was in the French Parliament one single unpleasant inquirer, the Senator Gaudin de Villaine, whose watchfulness has caused us to meet him twice already, and who tried to have some light shed on this dark story. But he also knew of the surprising order to the Press to say nothing at all about this highly suspicious Franco-Monegasque treaty, and a specially suspicious Article II of this suspicious treaty struck him very forcibly, the article which "pledges France to give financial help in the event of a failure of the casino of Monaco." But he knew nothing of the real circumstances, and so M. Poincaré, to whom he addressed his question, had no difficulty in reducing him to silence.

But we know more than M. Gaudin de Villaine; we know the man behind the scenes, the man who was behind this extraordinary treaty, and so we have once again to follow one of Mr. Zaharoff's private affairs right across world history.

He had no time to make use of his option at the moment. We are now in the autumn of 1918, in November—when peace broke out. And after that time Mr. Zaharoff was involved in an oil war against France. In July 1921, at the time of the great Greek offensive which threatened Constantinople with occupation and Kemal Pasha with downfall, in these July days Sir Basil Zaharoff, master of war, master of oil, master of banks, and "chief inspirer of British policy" found himself at the very height of his power. And just then—if we dare believe the evidence of Baroness P.—he received the news from Spain that the mad husband of the duchess was at last near his end. Actually something like that must have happened, for now in these July days the man from Tatavla appears for the first time and unnoticed as the plenipotentiary of the duchess. He is very sure that nothing will need to be hid longer.

He bought in the lady's name a castle—Château Balincourt, near Paris, once the possession of that Baroness Vaughan who lived in morganatic union with Leopold II of Belgium.

Sir Basil bought up all the post-cards on which the château was shown and expressly forbade the taking of photographs—

We may remember the report which we quoted earlier in another connection. To which yet another statement of Ro. may be added, that between this new-bought Château Balincourt, which was obviously intended for a summer residence, and the princely castle in Monaco there was a constant and animated interchange of letters. The option of 1918 was apparently going to be exercised. Preparations for the rise and enthronement of a new dynasty. And the royal dream of a greybeard came nearer and nearer to realization. Only a very short time, only a little longer need he wait now. For the light of life of that madman behind Spanish walls, that light was flickering.

It flickered; but it would not go out. And on other fronts things did not turn out as they were intended to, either. It was not Constantinople that fell, but Lloyd George. At the end of the year 1922 it was Lord Curzon who ruled, and Mr. Zaharoff had been made politically impotent. Certainly he had fallen on his feet. He demanded the return of the Bosporus docks, and thus torpedoed the first conference of Lausanne. He let French and Germans tear each other to bits in the Ruhr. He broke with Greece to have a free hand with the Turks. Aye, he is more alive and more like a dangerous beast of prey than ever he has been. But then suddenly, after an important political banquet in London, to extract whose secret we have wrestled in vain, Mr. Zaharoff hurriedly returns to France, and then suddenly—that, too, we have related—his political activity is at an end. We are now at May 15, 1923, when Mr. Zaharoff so abruptly disappeared from our ken. We promised we would continue our investigation in other

places and here we are. It is not exactly easy to get an insight into the psychological state of our hero at this date. He had been very ill; more, our authority Menevée relates that in those weeks for the first time a report got about of his death. Now he was better again, and in May 1923 he was once again engaged in politics, cautiously but actively. But what if you die? What if you die before that madman dies? Then you must not wait any longer unless, perhaps, you yourself wait on death and have not only lost a life but the deepest and truest meaning of your own life. But however one may estimate the psychological basis, the fact remains that Basil Zaharoff, directly after the French Press had reported his return to France, re-appeared in Monte Carlo. On May 18th—if we may trust Ro.—after he had disappeared from London and from his business affairs on the 14th. And in the days immediately following something happened down there. There was a *coup d'état*, that is to say, if one identifies the casino with the Monegasque state. A *coup d'état* from above! Accomplices: the prince—and Mr. Zaharoff freshly returned from another scene of action. There was, of course, no bloodshed. There was a short session of the board of control of the casino, so unsuspicious a happening that M. Camille Blanc did not trouble to attend it. Mr. Zaharoff, on other fronts, had some experience of meetings of boards of control. Only his men of straw turned up and distinguished themselves a little. He himself spent the afternoon under the trees on the terrace of the Casino and looked seawards with the fixed stare of an old man. On the evening of that day the absent Camille Blanc was overthrown. Two days later there was presented at a London bank the big cheque which Mr. Zaharoff had signed for that purpose. It was for one million pounds sterling.

The date of this *coup d'état* of an over-powerful cheque-book we shall fix: early summer 1923. And in November the event happened. A death notice arrived. The light of life in that madman had gone out at last. There had been four-and-thirty

years of waiting for that, but Mr. Basil Zaharoff was once again the victor. And he had that principality, too, in his hand and was turning his dream into reality and nothing stood now in the way of realizing the royal vision. He had held out for four-and-thirty years ; for the year of mourning that custom prescribed, another year of waiting, the patience of this man could not hold out longer. After ten of the twelve months, actually nine weeks before the term of mourning expired, on September 22, 1924—but we must read of this in the Press ; even the *Matin*, which was so ill-disposed to Mr. Basil Zaharoff, could not help admitting the greatness of the occasion, and celebrated it in large type and fat headlines. That is the topmost peak of a life. So let us take our time as if we were newspaper readers from France.

Mysterious Wedding of the Mysterious Sir Basil Zaharoff

Sir Basil Zaharoff Weds with Extraordinary Secrecy a Grandee of Spain

From our Special Correspondent

In a sudden fit of modesty the great ones of the earth feel the need to hide their good fortune from the gaze of ordinary mortals. So yesterday M. Basil Zaharoff sought to cover his wedding with a thick veil of mystery. But he did not quite succeed.

Yesterday, therefore, at 10.30 at the *mairie* of the pretty little village of Arronville, Monsieur Zaharoff was married to the Duchess of Marchena, whereby he acquires, so we are assured, incontestably the rank of a grandee of Spain.

Because of the age of the bride and bridegroom, as well as because of the deliberate avoidance of all pomp and circumstance, the ceremony had a certain austerity about it. Sir Basil Zaharoff—whose birth is also wrapped in mystery—acknowledges that he is 78, and the duchess, although considerably younger than her worthy bridegroom, has already with smiling grace taken up the rôle of grandmother.

All Arronville had known since the 9th of September that the châtelaine of Balincourt was going to marry one of the richest men in the world. But when would the ceremony take place? No one could boast that he knew that, not even the worthy mayor himself.

Then about half-past ten yesterday morning five people got out of a car; the bride and bridegroom, their two witnesses, and a son-in-law of the duchess. There was practically no one in the street—according to orders. But if the strangers had been able to see through closed shutters they would have seen a whole population armed with opera-glasses and telescopes. M. Basil Zaharoff climbed up the steps of the *mairie*, aiding his gouty legs with a stick, with the duchess his bride.

Under pretext that it might rain, the mayor had closed the shutters of the room in which the marriage took place, to the great disappointment of all the opera-glasses and telescopes. As the leading authority on fashion in Arronville told us, the bridegroom was admirable in grey "with a big American hat," and the duchess was in marocain.

We would have liked to have learned from the genial mayor of Arronville about this important event for the report of which we have to thank the army of opera-glasses and telescopes. It was no use. The worthy official was dumb. He smiled and said nothing. In vain we sought the help of the secretary; he was even more silent than his superior. With a look of fury he quickly tore from the door of the *mairie* the notice—but still too late—which informed the world that M. Zacharie Zaharoff and Madame Maria del Pilar, Duchess of Villafranca de los Caballeros and many other places, gave notice of marriage.

That happened on September 22, 1924. The dynasty Villafranca-Zaharoff or Zohar or Sahar, the dynasty of the new lords of Monaco, derived from the Houses of Bourbon and Tatavla —or perhaps from Wilkomir—this most extraordinary of all dynasties, is now really founded, and as good as enthroned. How did the new prince from the East enter his heritage? How did he come into his kingdom? On that we have a report in the conversations with our authority Ro., the representative

of a prince, and a gambler who in Monte Carlo is in his own special domain. Zaharoff, so he says, had been a speculator all his life, but never a gambler. And so he had no use at all for the almost patriarchal methods of the blessed François Blanc. He had not the tiny domain in his possession for a fortnight ere free entry into the casino was abolished, and every visitor had to take a ticket. That brought in three million additional francs a year. The lowest tariffs were doubled. Up to now every third or fourth inhabitant of Monaco had been an employee of the casino ; the sinecures were abolished and the superfluous thrown into the street. The passage money for ruined gamblers was done away with, and paid only in a few cases. The Blancs would never let it be said that anyone could become a beggar in the gold and marble establishment. So they had allowed small pensions to those who had lost their all at the tables—ten, fifteen francs a day. Among the pensioners were peers from England, marquises from France, and Russian proprietors of great estates *in partibus infidelium*. The new owner of the land was untouched by such sentimentality. The pensions ceased. The pensioners got two months' money on the spot and a ticket to Paris. Thus at the end it was not Bourbon which took possession of the land but Tatavla. The great adventurer, a crown on his snow-white hair—in spite of everything it is not certain whether it is a princely crown or a fool's cap—turns his royal dream into reality while he sacks employees and deprives ruined gamblers of their pension. He has attained his end, or as good as attained it. But there is no trace of relaxation, pleasure, or the feeling of having arrived, to be found in his looks. Here is a tale related by Ro.

Zaharoff was lord of the principality and of the casino ; everyone knew that. Many a gambler plucked up courage to go up to his chair and say : "Sir Basil, I have lost my money. You are the richest man in the world." No one ever got further. The old gentleman fixed him with cold, hate-filled eyes, and what

he said stuck in the gizzard of the petitioner, "Go to the devil," said the old boy, and he said it in any language you liked. He could insult you in English, French, Italian, Greek, Russian, with the same fluency. Once a lady in English society went up to him on the terrace. He would probably have liked nothing better than to chase her away with his stick, but he could not get rid of her so easily and snarled out a greeting. She said : "Help me, Sir Basil. As everything belongs to you, you must know how to win." He answered : "I don't bother with the casino, I don't even know what they play there. But I can give you one bit of advice. Not how you'll win, but how most certainly you won't lose." She : "Oh, do tell me." He : "Don't play," and shut his eyes as a sign that the interview was ended.

Another tale reported by Lewinsohn :

A French journalist went to Zaharoff with the question which had once been asked in the Chamber of Deputies. What nationality did he claim to be, and how did he get his high honours. The answer was a card with the words, in French : "M. Zaharoff having no voice you cannot make him sing" (*faire chanter*).

Faire chanter means to blackmail.

A third tale reported by P. of London :

Monte Carlo. The terrace of the casino. Zaharoff is sitting in the sun. A couple of gentlemen newly arrived, belonging "to the best families in the Phanar," that is, to that Greek aristocracy on the Bosporus to which Zaharoff in his younger days was bound by such ties of affectation, take up their stand near him and say half loud out : "Is it he or isn't it?" Then the old man, whose ears are so sharp, turns his head slowly and calls to them : "Certainly it is, gentlemen. The scoundrel Zaharoff from Tatavla !"

For those who have ears to hear, there is something there more human than in those other pleasant but paltry tales of avarice. What comes out there is the secret bitterness of one

who after a long life of victory attains his end, thinks he has attained it and stretches out bony hands to seize the prize of victory. But no, let us read of this, too, in the newspapers. On September 22, 1924, Zaharoff had married the Duchess of Villafranca. Eighteen months later, on February 26, 1926, this appeared in the *Temps* :

Yesterday, after a short illness, there died in Monte Carlo Madame Basil Zaharoff, Duchess of Villafranca. The loss of this noble lady, whose goodness and generosity were proverbial, will be deeply regretted by all who came in contact with her and who knew her charm, her culture, her wit, and her benevolence which she practised so quietly.

Thus the prize of victory before the grasping, bony hands of the man who had arrived at it after such exertion turned into nothingness. Eighteen months of married life after four-and-thirty years of waiting. It is a tragedy, and this is the fifth act of it. Here there has slipped an error into the calculations of this great reckoner. The *coup d'état* of Monte Carlo, that dream of royalty so boldly dreamed and turned into very reality by a Levantine adventurer for the sake of a duchess of the House of Bourbon, *via* the casino, peace treaties, a greedy dynasty, was shattered because every risk had been covered except one, and a way to avoid that one had not been found even in Tatavla. Here a stronger than he intervened. Here the great business man Zaharoff met someone more powerful than he, and so this one bit of business, this last bit of business was never carried out to the end. Two months later he sold Monte Carlo to the banking house of Dreyfus. He did so without denying his past even in his grief. He had bought it for a million pounds sterling ; he sold it for three million four hundred thousand. From the Monte Carlo–Monaco transaction, from the royal dream which was not realized, he drew a profit of 240 per cent.

In the same year he sold out his Vickers holdings as well.

The Company had slipped from his control; other men were at its helm, were steering on a wrong course of expansion—and as a result the only possible chance of salvation was by an amalgamation with the Armstrong company, which was also in the same dangerous position. This *coup* by which Armstrong shareholders got much the worst of it as compared with the Vickers shareholders must have been started by the old man himself, trembling now though his hands were, before he sold his holdings and went out of business. That was on the 16th of October, 1927, an appropriate time for the presentation of a chalice on which was inscribed:

Presented to Sir Basil Zaharoff, Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire and of the Order of the Bath, by the chairman and directors of the Vickers Company on the occasion of his completion of fifty years' connection with the company, and as token of its keen realization of the valuable work which he has done for it, in cordial gratitude and with deep respect.

It was fifty years since he had sold that first Nordenfeldt submarine. Half a century. So the swansong finished off, so the obituary was set up. But although in 1927 he was once more reported among the dead, we will not let this man die so soon. Now, when he has put behind him offices, honours, business affairs, and passions great and small, and has lived life out to the end, now, when nothing more remains for him to do but sit down there in the sun in Monte Carlo, and to wait for that power who, as commission for the negotiation of many a fat deal, will pay him a quiet old age with days of life for coin—now, before we take final leave of him, we must look once again at him, the child of fortune.

We are not told whether at the death of his much loved wife and after so long a struggle for her he let himself give way to any expression of grief, any expression of feeling. Like a wicked spider frightened from its web he scurried into a corner and remained crouched there; to all appearance

dead as a doornail for those who cast only a passing glance in his direction, until a second look saw with terror the watchful living eyes with the lust of prey in them of this monster in ambush, a monster which was old to the point of death, but from whom threads ran out over all the world. In this connection we may remember what Ro. said, an assertion backed up by other reliable witnesses, that Zaharoff had been induced to buy up Monte Carlo not only for a gamble, not only through greed of gain, not only because of that royal dream of his, but because something very different had also given the final urge to that course.

Before he made up his mind to sign that cheque for a million pounds, he asked—so Ro. says—a couple of days to think it over; he consulted people who knew all about gambling and expert mathematicians—Ro. himself seems to have been one of them—and had scientific memoranda prepared on the gambling trade. These memoranda were very favourable—from the point of view of the holder of the bank. In spite of that, Zaharoff still remained undecided until he was told that in the archives of that bank there was the biggest "Who's Who" in the world, with exhaustive information regarding the past, present, fortune, and connections of every one of any importance whatever who ever had entered the territory of Monaco. All that had been collected with the aid of a particularly efficient information service, and special attention had been given to the rooting out of private and intimate details. Whenever he heard that, his mind was made up. It was only then that he put the cheque on the table.

We could not accept without more ado such penny-novel evidence were it not for the fact that we can control by results this capture of the Monte Carlo information service. It is certain that the gentleman with the imperial, driven from active life, confined to an armchair, poised between mortal illness and the report of his death, did undertake yet another incursion into the world of living men. Suddenly the news

was bruited abroad in Europe that the greybeard had captured these secret archives and intended to use the material in them to write his memoirs. In certain circles the effect was sensational, and ran the whole gamut through from indignation and menace to expressions of sheer panic. What did this old fellow know whose lips it was hoped were sealed for ever, and of whose death people had read in the Press with mixed feelings? Whom now would he strip bare, whose reputation would he explode and ruin, whom would he hurl to the abyss? Intervention—that was no good. The old man wrote, went on writing. Then there came this news which appeared in small type in the Paris newspapers under the heading "News from all quarters":

Fire in a room in the Avenue Hoche. In 53 Avenue Hoche a fire broke out yesterday evening which the fire brigade got under control within half an hour. The valuable furniture was seriously damaged by fire and by water. The cause of the fire was ascertained; owner of the house without taking precaution had been burning a great mass of papers in the fireplace.

And two days later the Paris papers had more information to give. The burned papers were the memoirs of Mr. Basil Zaharoff. On the morning of the fire a servant got hold of them and then bolted; a servant who, it is alleged, had been in the house for years and was perhaps the same servant who, in the year 1913, had sold to Mr. Haim Menelewitsch Sahar the secret telephone number of his master. The fugitive was arrested the same evening in the Bois de Boulogne, when he was negotiating with an unknown man, who succeeded in getting away, for the sale of the packet of manuscript. The packet was handed back to the owner. Shortly afterwards the room caught fire. When a big Paris paper offered a thousand pounds for each written page of the memoirs, there was no response.

So this cup, too, passed from the great ones of this earth. Mr. Basil Zaharoff kept silence. He returned to his old taci-

turnity. He still sat like a spider in his dark corner and what happened to those thousand threads that linked him to all the world, those which hung broken and rent and those which still hang elastic and dangerous, the observer cannot see in this darkening twilight. How did the old man live now, how did the days go by ?

Yes, how did the days go by ? There he lay, called Basil Zaharoff or Sohar or Zahar, but all that is as good as forgotten. He lies in a soft, broad, ornamented gilded bed which—he hates. It was acquired at the cost of much good money from an antique dealer, one of these dealers to be deceived by whom is considered by society to be good form. This bed, which once belonged to a harlot of Louis the such-and-such of France, dearer than fifteen of those solid brass-mounted beds which he likes, almost as dear as an anit-aircraft gun, the bed which produces hundreds of sleepless nights. Ah, those beds in his young days, those thousand royal sleeping places in the East, sacks of straw which, Good God, were really alive, and on top of them a rough, solid, masculine-smelling sheep-skin. But that is all past. And now he lies sleepless in this accursed bed of a dead harlot, and knows himself to be Basil Zaharoff, G.C.B., Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, and once again has to lift his heavy lids on which the veins stand out from those dull, hard, flinty, colourless seafarer's eyes of his. His day begins. What o'clock is it ? Nine. Now the second servant should have been in the room already with the morning tea, but he has sacked him. He has sacked many of these domestic pests in the last year. Let them strip others bare ; he, Mr. Basil Zaharoff, is cutting down expenses. For he sleeps in a golden bed and keeps in the drawer over there a couple of his treasured cheque books, those wonder books in which one has only to write one's name and good, real gold comes forth, rattling ; but still, somewhere in the corner, the misery of his childhood reappears, and sometimes at night,

in spite of gold and cheque books, poverty and despair stand like ghosts behind him and gibber over his shoulder.

But it is time to get up. He rings for the servant whom he has kept and who has grown grey in his service. How many old and young has he outlived! No, his help in dressing is not necessary; let him sit over there on the footstool by the window and read out the newspapers. And meantime, with those slightly crooked fingers of his, stained by the smoking now forbidden him—may the devil take all doctors!—the fingers of an old man, the fingers of a money-changer, through which the bones show, the bones of that skeleton of his which has been his life-long companion—with these fingers he takes the clothes from a chair while the servant reads. What is he reading? Two new non-aggression pacts, a naval convention, disarmament conferences in Geneva! Ah, if he had not rheumatism in every limb—it is only a touch of rheumatism and, if the doctor says it is something else, the devil take him—if he had not this rheumatism, he laughs, a piece would be off the board.

It took some trouble, but at last he is dressed. The secretary is summoned. What does he bring? Eleven letters. Eight of them from Greece. The old friends over there want money directly or indirectly. They, at least, haven't forgotten him. Now what shall he do this yawning empty day which lies before him, with what activity shall he occupy himself? If he was in Paris he would go in one of his three cars—one would suffice, but the prices they give for second-hand cars are scandalous—he would go to the Bois and stop in the Avenue des Acacias where the secretary would earn his salary by reading him something for an hour or so, newspapers, books —*Don Quixote*, which he can repeat from memory, just as well as in the good old days he could repeat the price list of an armament factory, but a magic spell binds him eternally to this fool who, for the sake of a Spanish Dulcinea, tilted with windmills—until he was ready again for another small

and dainty meal. But here he is not in Paris ; here he can fare better, for here he has the private park of his château. The bath chair is pushed up to the foot of the short flight of steps which lead from his bedroom to the sandy courtyard, and which he descends unaided, just feeling his way a little for the steps with his stick. There it is, the little carriage driven by electricity and running on rubber tyres—with steel springs from Sheffield—and thus he loves to drive along the private paths of his park, going quietly round a fence so that a gardener fellow leaps up as if a ghost had appeared. At the park pond he will perhaps climb cautiously and with imprecations into the boat which the servant has to row, gliding soundlessly over the silent green of the pond beneath hanging boughs over the sluggish water.

Is it dinner time already ? He eats alone as he does every day, he dresses for dinner every day. A skeleton with dazzling white shirt-front ; so he sits in front of glasses, plates, and shining metal cutlery—steel knives from Sheffield !—alone at a corner of a long, empty table which has seen thousands of guests and gold plate and dishes, until these guests had passed, dead and blown to the four winds of heaven, and the gold plate had been changed into coin of France to be spent by a great patriot and friend of mankind. Did someone laugh ? There is no one in the empty room beside himself. Not that this in any way spoils his appetite. He filched his chef from the Hôtel de Paris in Monte Carlo. He is almost a master cook himself. He is finicky, but fond of his food ; his appetite is excellent. What a pity the meal is over ! Go to sleep ? Don't speak to him of going to sleep on the luxurious bed of that French harlot whose name, thank Heaven, he has forgotten. No, he goes for a little to his study. He sits down at his desk and sits motionless. Read ? He has always had a wholesome mistrust of the written word. If one needs something written for war and peace then one buys it. But he does not read. He sits there in his loneliness and looks at the polished surface

of the desk, the desk on which so much paper has passed, generations of paper. Orders for munitions, letters from ministers and beggars, spies' reports, accounts, the dumb cry of hundreds of thousands of begging, questioning, threatening, beseeching, coaxing, cursing letters which have now all fluttered away and are lost in the past. All that remains is the flat surface of the desk, dumb, shining, polished wood. And on it the picture of a woman who is dead.

Is there nothing else which has kept its place on this emptied desk which is thronged by unseen millions, kept it even until this present loneliness of his? Oh yes, there is. The models. Made of gold with millimeter exactness, a costly toy, there the machine-gun stands, the famous Maxim gun, only an inch or two long. Then there a howitzer raises its golden muzzle, graceful and threatening. And that coastal defence gun, thin as the ankle of a girl not grown to womanhood and shimmering golden like a woman's hair, the gun which increased a thousandfold thundered at the Dardanelles. But that one, that last one on the right, half-hidden behind the picture of the woman whom he had had to return to the dust from whence she came, that last little model—yesterday, just at this hour he had put a meadow-flower with his gambler's fingers in its graceful yawning muzzle and now it is faded—now he recognizes it. The flamethrower of Ypres! the flamethrower of Ypres glittering there in gold with millimeter exactness, stands on the desk of Mr. Basil Zaharoff.

Mr. Basil Zaharoff now takes the telescope from the middle drawer of the desk where it lies ready, and, as he does every evening, gazes through the open window to those distances which now only his eyes can reach. Then the old servant, crouching on a chair on the floor near the door is many a time roused from semi-slumber as the old man in the darkened room walks from fireplace to window, up and down, to and fro, till long into the night, just tapping a little in front of him with his stick. He does not go to bed, to the bed of the French

harlot over which that antique dealer swindled him, before the first cock crows and he is reeling with weariness. For he does not sleep. When one is dead one will sleep well enough.

But we will not let him die yet. As we have given ourselves such trouble to sift the false from the true, this book would be incomplete if we did not ask ourselves the strange question : What lies were told about this man ? Here is matter to fill another book. Yet read these lines from an article by the French journalist Félicien Champsaur :

At the age of eighteen Mr. Zaharoff went off with his father's money-box and thereby at one stroke ruined his whole family. Various adventures in Greece got him a term in gaol. He then bobbed up in England and once again got a heavy sentence. After finishing his term, he went off to the United States and got a job as a car attendant with the Pullman Company. By his intelligence and diligence he pleased his employers so much that Pullman gave him a post of trust. Before he accepted, Zaharoff asked Pullman to be allowed to tell him his past without glossing over anything. This confession, as bold as it was clever, made a big impression on Pullman, and he sent him off to London as his agent to Vickers-Maxim.

That is relatively accurate compared with the sensational "revelations" which another journalist made :

As to authenticity of detail it may be said that because of the writer's intimate knowledge of Zaharoff and the man's secret activities he was forced to flee Europe.

So says the publisher of the book. In it you may learn that Scotland Yard had hatched a plot with Mr. Haim Manelewitsch Sahar, the ever-appearing son, to collar the death duties on Zaharoff's fortune for Britain, that Zaharoff when he was a Russo-Jewish soldier had been a bandit in Siberia— "and everyone knows about the bandits of Siberia and their

incredible wickedness"—and there laid the foundations of his fortune. None the less, the writer leaves his anxious readers the choice between this story and another. According to the second tale, Zaharoff was no Russo-Jewish-Siberian bandit, but was in his younger days a bishop ! In the 'eighties he was living as Orthodox Bishop Antonius in the Czar's court as the favourite of the Czarina. When the latter in her passion for jewellery cast covetous eyes on the holy jewels in his reliquary, the pious priest gave her not them but imitations ; the trick was discovered ; he had to flee, got to Constantinople, took the name of Zaharoff, and became a dealer in armaments.

But no more of that. Other stories are more harmless. That he was a carpet dealer in Sofia who suddenly began to sell munitions, that he presented France with a hundred million francs to support her currency, that he contrived in order to get rich to stir up a war in Tierra del Fuego, that he in the autumn of 1921 financed the attempt of the late Austrian Emperor Karl to win the throne of Hungary.

At this let us pause for a moment. The allegation that Zaharoff financed the Karl *putsch* appears in so many sources that it is worth taking some trouble to refute it. As is known, the dethroned Emperor went to Switzerland and from there pursued actively a restoration policy. That policy was cautiously encouraged by Aristide Briand, who once before had used Mr. Zaharoff as intermediary on the occasion of those thorny affairs in Greece which could not be touched officially. He was once again entrusted with the prosecution of the business. Bu there, let us say at once, the story breaks down. I quote from a letter to me by the secretary of the late emperor, Baron von Werkmann :

I can tell you quite categorically that there is not the least truth in the report. There never were relations of any kind between His Majesty and Sir Basil Zaharoff. The late Emperor knew of Sir Basil's existence only from the newspapers—no more. If a millionaire like Sir Basil Zaharoff had really financed

the Habsburg movement, it would have got on better, presuming, that is, that it would have accepted money from a man of his stamp. By the phrase, "man of his stamp," I do not mean to insult Sir Basil, but merely to indicate that he was completely apart from Austro-Hungarian affairs and interests.

In short, the story has broken down, and it cannot be put together again. As a last resort we asked Ro., who has moved a lot in court circles. The answer is given here not only because it makes public a jolly little incident, but also because it shows how history is made.

Actually, so Ro. reports, there never was any arrangement between the Emperor Karl and Zaharoff. But the report obstinately persisted that Sir Basil had put at the emperor's disposal six hundred thousand, and then another million Swiss francs. The truth at the back of the story is this : In 1920, when the Emperor sold his jewels and the proceeds disappeared into strange hands and when the budget of the Imperial household had to be greatly curtailed as a result, a Hungarian lady of the aristocracy devised a daring scheme, and for its carrying out collected half a million francs from the nobility of the old Monarchy. Two former officers of the Austrian cavalry had come to her, and had told her that they had found an absolutely sure system, with the help of which it would be possible to win some millions from the bank of Monte Carlo. The system was a very complicated one, depending on the variation of the odds against winning, and of its success anyone not thoroughly familiar with the play at Monte Carlo could have been convinced without much difficulty. In the autumn of 1921 the war of the Austrian legitimists on the bank of Monte Carlo broke out. To work the system four persons were needed. They communicated only by signs and went to work with such an elaboration of mystery that for a time they were able to escape the eyes of the surveillance exercised by the casino company. The thing first came out after the syndicate had shot away all its shells in this game for an

Imperial crown. The struggle was fierce but short. They won; they lost. After four weeks they had laid down the last franc and the four romantic dreamers of a royal restoration disappeared, never to be seen again.

All that had been done without the knowledge of the Emperor Karl—so Ro. goes on—and it would never have come out had not those who supplied the money suspected the four gamblers of not having played the game and of simply having gone off with the loot. So there was nothing for it but for the lady who had conceived the scheme to tell the whole story to the Emperor. He took her under his protection. He wanted, although he himself was in need, to make the losses good. That was refused. So the whole incident ended in chivalry and tears, and an oath of silence was imposed on all those who had played any part in it. But that Basil Zaharoff was brought into any connection at all with the business was simply due to the fact that the four mystery gamblers were seen in Monte Carlo. That they really thought of planning their campaign through the bank instead of in conversation with its owner—no one could think that.

A few weeks later the Emperor flew to Hungary—and to his destruction.

So here really and truly is a story without Zaharoff. Here we have destroyed a legend. He wasn't there; he was not a fellow conspirator. Ah, he is getting old, this unflinching conspirator; in the course of our investigations he has become really very old. Lewinsohn writes somewhere:

> The palace of Zaharoff in Paris stands empty. The policeman still paces inconspicuously past it. Now and again a passer-by or two stops and looks at it.

This policeman, the policeman who paced past it, I interviewed. I went to the Avenue Hoche. I did actually find outside No. 53 a policeman posted, a fine-looking fellow with a carefully trimmed black beard, and I got into conversation

with him. Oh, yes, he was stationed here ; he had been a couple of years on the job. He was communicative ; he even touched lightly on politics. Then I said : Which actually is M.Zaharoff's house ?" He (very surprised) : "M. Zaharoff ?" I : "Zaharoff." He : "I don't know him ; never heard the name."

Actually he knew nothing, nothing at all of the old man. The last trace of a meteor through the noisy streets of Paris, "M. Zaharoff." Then, too, when for the first time I got on to his track in the *Tout Paris* of 1891, he was a "M. Zaharoff, possessor of foreign orders." Between then and now that name Zaharoff, rightly spelled and rightly pronounced, was not unknown in this street. Between that not yet and this no more there lay a life.

I went up to the house. The door was locked and the shutters on the windows closed.

Let us leave them closed, these shutters. Closed for ever. What a life is there unfolded before our eyes. What a wealth of colour and wild adventure. What an excess of carefully planned acquisitiveness, brutal craft, passionate heartlessness and heartless passion. An exuberant, intoxicating, kingly life drained to the dregs, if it were permissible to apply such aesthetic standards to it. But is it permissible to allow oneself to be prevented by the super-dimension of his success from calling by its true name his super-dimensional crime ? A criminal then ? Nay, that too, is only a half-truth. Perhaps he is as splendidly innocent, as terribly innocent as is any beast who preys on others and then is, in its turn, the prey of other beasts. There lives in England one of the least prejudiced of men alive to-day, H. G. Wells, and this is what he writes in his book *The Work, Wealth, and Happiness of Mankind*, about Basil Zaharoff :

Indisputably this man has spent a large part of his life in the equipment and promotion of human slaughter. And it is unjust and absurd to blame him for doing so. It is so cheap

and easy for the sentimental pacifists to be indignant about him, but all of us are involved in the complex of processes that carried him to wealth and all of us have a share in his responsibility. Circumstances beyond his control built up his ideology. He has simply been modest enough not to question the standards of the world about him but to observe them faithfully and intelligently. It is plain that he had always accepted the making of money as a justification for his operations. Monetary success ought to be the indication of social service. If it is not, the fault is primarily with the political and business system and only secondarily with the individuals who make money. The organization of killing is inherent in our accepted ideology. The picture of an Anatolian Greek, overwhelmed by his riches, adorned with the highest honours France, Britain, and Oxford can bestow, and amusing himself by running a gambling palace in his declining years, displayed against a background of innumerable millions of men maimed, tortured, scalded, mutilated, and killed, may be an effective indictment of our political traditions, but in no sense is it a personal condemnation. Millions of his contemporaries would have played the same game had they thought of it and known how. There was nothing in their personas to prevent it. If anything is wrong it is in the educational influences and in the political, economic, and financial opportunities that evoked those personas.

In the same year as that book was written the Vickers company assembled its shareholders—— But of that latest general meeting of the Vickers company, let us hear from an eye-witness.

The annual general meeting which, as usual, was held on Easter Monday was an exciting one. I confess I went to it because a look I had had previously at the list of shareholders made me hope that Dean Inge would be there. He could have represented about five hundred clergymen of the Church of England who hold armament shares. I had hoped that the Clergy Pensions Fund would also be represented, for its shareholding is ten times as big as that of the chairman. However,

the paid officials of the Prince of Peace, if they did not signalize themselves by their absence, did so by their silence.

I was a little late in arriving. When I entered the hall Sir Herbert Lawrence was just remarking with evident pleasure that "the orders for land armaments have increased in a comforting manner. It is not easy," he continued, "to understand the prejudice that exists in a small section of the public against the so-called armament firms, which are just as much a part of the defensive system of these islands as are the forts that defend our harbours."

But the real excitement began when the chairman asked if anyone wanted to ask any questions. At once Miss Eleanor Rathbone, M.P., got up with a copy of a German paper in her hand in which she said Vickers were advertising their tanks. "Of course," answered Sir Herbert Lawrence, "that is not meant for Germany but for our old and tried friends in South America." "But," said Miss Rathbone in amazement, "I have here a letter from the publisher of the paper in which it is said that their circulation outside Germany amounts scarcely to 800 copies. Is the chairman in a position to assure us that Vickers neither directly or indirectly is helping in the rearmament of Germany ?" There was a short pause, and then Sir Herbert replied, "I cannot give any definite assurance of such a kind." And amid the applause of the shareholders he passed quickly to another point.

In the relative quiet which succeeded someone moved that a vote of thanks to the directors be passed. In the discussion on that motion a shareholder, who had so far in vain tried to speak, now got a chance. He said he was surprised to hear from the speech of the chairman that Vickers had no influence either direct or indirect on any newspaper, British or foreign. He named Mr. Bryce, who combined the duties of *The Times* correspondent in Belgrade with that of Vickers' agent there. In Bucarest he said *The Times* had appointed as their correspondent a Mr. Boncesco, who had no journalistic experience whatsoever. He too was similarly an agent of Vickers. When Herr Boncesco lost this latter post, he also lost his job with *The Times*.

"But this mysterious combination of a great newspaper with

Vickers," the shareholder proceeded, "does not end there. When Mr. Boncesco retired the post of *The Times* correspondent was filled by another young man from the Vickers offices who, too, had no journalistic experience. In Prague—— " The rest of his story was drowned by the noise made by the shareholders ; it was a very successful meeting.

It remains for the biographer to report that on August 12, 1933, the Bucarest newspapers printed the report that Sir Basil Zaharoff was dangerously ill and was on his death-bed.

The news that Sir Basil had died came from London on September 16.

That was the day when I met that Greek ex-premier whom I call D.

I. Did you hear that Zaharoff died to-day ?
HE. I read it but I don't believe it.
I. Why ? Have you had different news ?
HE. I haven't had any news at all. But I've known him too long. Every year for ten years he puts in the papers that he is dead—only in order not to die.
I. But——
HE. No, you needn't smile. I'm not joking. Monsieur Zaharoff doesn't die.

Next morning the news of the death of the old man was denied in a message from Paris ; he still breathed.

And then once again there came word from London and informed us that once again there had been a resurrection :

To-day Sir Basil felt as well as ever and went for a ride in his electric bath-chair in his park at his beautiful country seat, Château Balincourt.

Thus he still lived, as the Greek ex-premier had foreseen. We have now only one more report to give before the last. It comes from America. When Basil Zaharoff in this way once again preferred life, when he died and didn't die, when he felt so suddenly well and alive again that he rolled through his

park on his rubber-tyred carriage—steel springs from Sheffield! —an American newspaper resolved to get to the bottom of the mystery, and sent out a special correspondent. He, however, reported that Sir Basil was neither sick nor well. For for long Sir Basil had been dead and gathered to his fathers. Another was going on playing his part in life, a plot of the dark forces who were once again at work to maintain that spider's net which falls to the ground when the insect in the middle of it falls.

The sensational yarn of a journalist? A lie? No doubt.

The true report came from Monte Carlo on November 27, 1936. He died, so it was reported, in the arms of his valet at 9 o'clock in the morning in his suite in the Hotel de Paris. Madame de Bourbon, so ran the account, was in the neighbouring room. She was called but found him already dead. The body was taken to the Châteaux Balincourt and buried beside the woman whom he had loved throughout a lifetime. Only his secretary, daughters and son-in-law were present at the funeral. Nobody else. When Haim Manelewitsch Sahar, the eternal son, arrived in France from London, he came too late. Nobody had paid any attention to that identity mark, "shaped like two bean pods," on which he based his claim to be Zaharoff's son; nobody wanted to know anything about it, nobody had seen anything. The body was already buried. Zaharoff had in fact—yes, now it came out—died two days earlier than the world, and with it Mr. Haim Manelewitsch Sahar, had been told. He had been robbed of his proof.

The newspaper accounts after the old man's death, obituaries, personal recollections, contained some fantastic stories, some ingenuous, some wildly imagined, but nothing new. Barring one small report in the London *Daily Telegraph*, which must not be concealed from the reader of this book. In answer to a question as to his origin—so wrote an acquaintance of the dead man—the old man answered him: "I am a Rugby boy." Following Mughla, Tatavla, Wilkomir and

Phanar this is thus the fifth and last version. At the end it was only suitable for the great *vieillard* to have been educated in one of the most expensive English public schools. Death prevented him attaining the full seven versions of his master, Homer.

There remained the will; there remained the money. The old man's fortune had at one time been estimated at as high as one hundred million pounds sterling. When he died one guessed it as twenty millions. Two days later as ten. Five days after his death as four. When his will was at last unsealed there were present, apart from the statutory official, only his secretary, his two daughters and his son-in-law. As had been expected, the two daughters were the sole heiresses, the sum—such was the account given to the papers—was one million.

So the old man remained secretive to his death. Only that he is really dead is this time confirmed officially in a death certificate issued by the Mairie de Balincourt.

But after so many documents we are sceptical of this document also. For the Zaharoff's are immortal.

SOURCES

In addition to the original documents, letters, and statements by witness reproduced for the first time in this book, the following have been used :

1. Proceedings of the German Reichstag, Berlin ; Parliamentary Records, House of Commons, London ; Official Journal : Debates in the Chamber of Deputies, Paris.

2. The publications containing official Russian diplomatic documents, 1914–1918 ; documents from the Ministry of War, Vienna ; the Register of the Old Bailey, London.

3. The following newspapers and reviews : *Activité française et étrangère*, *Crapouillot*, *Daily Herald*, *Daily Mail*, *Documents politiques*, *Echo National*, *Eclaireur du Soir*, *Excelsior*, *Echo de Paris*, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, *Homme libre*, *Humanité*, *Information*, *Japan Weekly Chronicle*, *Die Kommunistische International*, *Krasnaja Gazeta*, *Koelnische Zeitung*, *New Leader*, *Lumière*, *Matin*, *Neue Freie Presse*, *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, *Neues Wiener Journal*, *Petit Bleu*, *Sketch*, *Sunday Express*, *Temps*, *The Times*, *Tribune de Paris*, *Weekly Dispatch ;*

 and also messages of the Agence d'Athénes, the Agence Radio, the Agence Sans-Fil, Reuter, and Wolff.

4. The following books and pamphlets :

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 Dartiges de Fournet : Mémoires d'un Amiral.

 Vincent H. P. Caillard : Report on the Revenues ceded by Turkey to the bondholders of the Ottoman Public Debt.

 Lady Caillard : Sir Vincent Caillard speaks from the Spirit World.

 Casanova : Memoirs.

 Félicien Champsaur : L'Hurluberlu.

 Egon, Conte Corti : Die Familie Blanc.

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Louis Fischer : Oil Imperialism.
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G. Glasgow : Life of Venizelos.
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